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ETHNICITY AND AREAL ORGANIZATION AMONG FRENCH
CANADIANS IN THE PEACE RIVER DISTRICT, ALBERTA

by



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A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and
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..French Canadians in the Peace River District, Alberta.....
submitted byWayne Jackson.....
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ABSTRACT

The main theme of this study is the unity of a group of some 6000 French Canadians living in the Eastern Peace River District. The existing literature on the French Canadians of the Prairie Provinces claims that they are a cohesive group, and that this cohesion is built on the French language and the Roman Catholic faith.

The approach employed involves culture regions and areal functional organization. A French culture region is delimited and its boundaries are tested. This region is found to be significantly different from the surrounding area with respect to several criteria. The French Region is sub-divided into the Core and the Periphery. The strength of the region's focus is then examined in detail. Falher, the major town of the French Region, has a large number of central functions for its population size, but does not act as the major town for either the entire French Region or for a predicted trade area. Its importance declines outside of the Core, but it is always used more by French people than by non-French people. To this degree the French Region is focused on Falher. The extent of the area for which Falher is the social and cultural focus is similar to the area which is economically dependent on it, and does not include the entire French Region. The Smoky River acts as a major barrier to the Falher orientation of French people living west of it.

The fact that many French people regularly travel to centers other than Falher or smaller French towns indicates that they must learn English and use it a good part of the time. The French language is also suffering a decline because of the quality of instruction in the schools, migration towards the cities, increase in farm size combined with

lessening demands for agricultural labor, and influence of the English language media. With this being the case there is the possibility that the French Region is in the process of losing some of the uniqueness that it has and the people may be on the verge of being assimilated to the same degree as the European ethnic groups in Western Canada.

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I must also express my gratitude to Miss Janet Franck for her competent typing during all stages of the thesis, to Mrs. Barbara Garlock for excellent proof reading, to Mr. Jack Chesterman whose ability in the field of map reproduction must by now be known the world over, and to Miss Diane Rose for some efficient and speedy computer work.

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CHAPTER I

THE AIMS OF THE STUDY

The French Canadians in the West

There are over 155,000 French Canadians in the Prairie Provinces. Although there are federal statutory guarantees for the survival of their language it, as yet, has no regional political protection. The French Canadians came West from Quebec, some directly and others via New England, Minnesota or the Dakotas, in groups with a feeling of communal solidarity (Dawson, 1936, pp. xv-xx). Nevertheless they settled on scattered homesteads and as a result have been subject to most of the forces which are transforming other minorities into individualistic English-speaking communities. They have, however, been able to survive as distinctive groups in various parts of the West, using their language to a greater degree than other minorities, having it taught in the schools, and having it used in their own communications media.

The famous Canadian historian, G.F.G. Stanley, has called the French Canadian survival in the West a miracle (Stanley, 1960, p. 331). This survival has been attributed to a variety of reasons: the constitutional guarantees, a survival ideology based on language and religion, La Survivance, the power of the Church and its priests, and the strength of the French fact itself. A sociologically oriented inquiry into the viability of the major French-speaking areas outside Quebec has recently begun (Vallee, 1968). This massive undertaking will attempt to determine a social power score for each of the study groups in the hope of suggesting a method to study ethnic viability or

strength. It will collect and analyze material on the various groups concerning their history of settlement, statutory provisions, demographic patterns and trends, extent and kind of organization, group and individual resources, and other data collected from groups and outsiders.

The Problem

This thesis will look at a French group and its survival in a somewhat different light, using a geographic or spatial approach, and while not intended to provide all the answers it should provide more background to, and clarification of, the problem. The study falls into the broad category of cultural geography and involves more particularly the concept of areal functional organization. The study area is one of the three major areas of French rural settlement in Alberta, the area around the town of Falher in the Peace River Region; the others being centered on the towns of Morinville and Legal, and St. Paul and Bonnyville, north and northeast of Edmonton (Figure 1.1). Although Falher and Bonnyville are over 260 miles apart, Vallee treats Northern Alberta as one region, even though he is trying to escape from the habit of coming to conclusions about widely scattered groups.

Though cultural geography has an extensive literature there is little agreement on its scope and few basic explanatory works exist. One of the classics to date defines the field as the application of the idea of culture to geographic problems and divides it into five areas - culture, culture area, cultural landscape, culture history and cultural ecology (Wagner and Mikesell, 1962, p. 1). Ackerman and others (1966, p. 26) in The Science of Geography note that:

Two different integrative methods have been used widely in

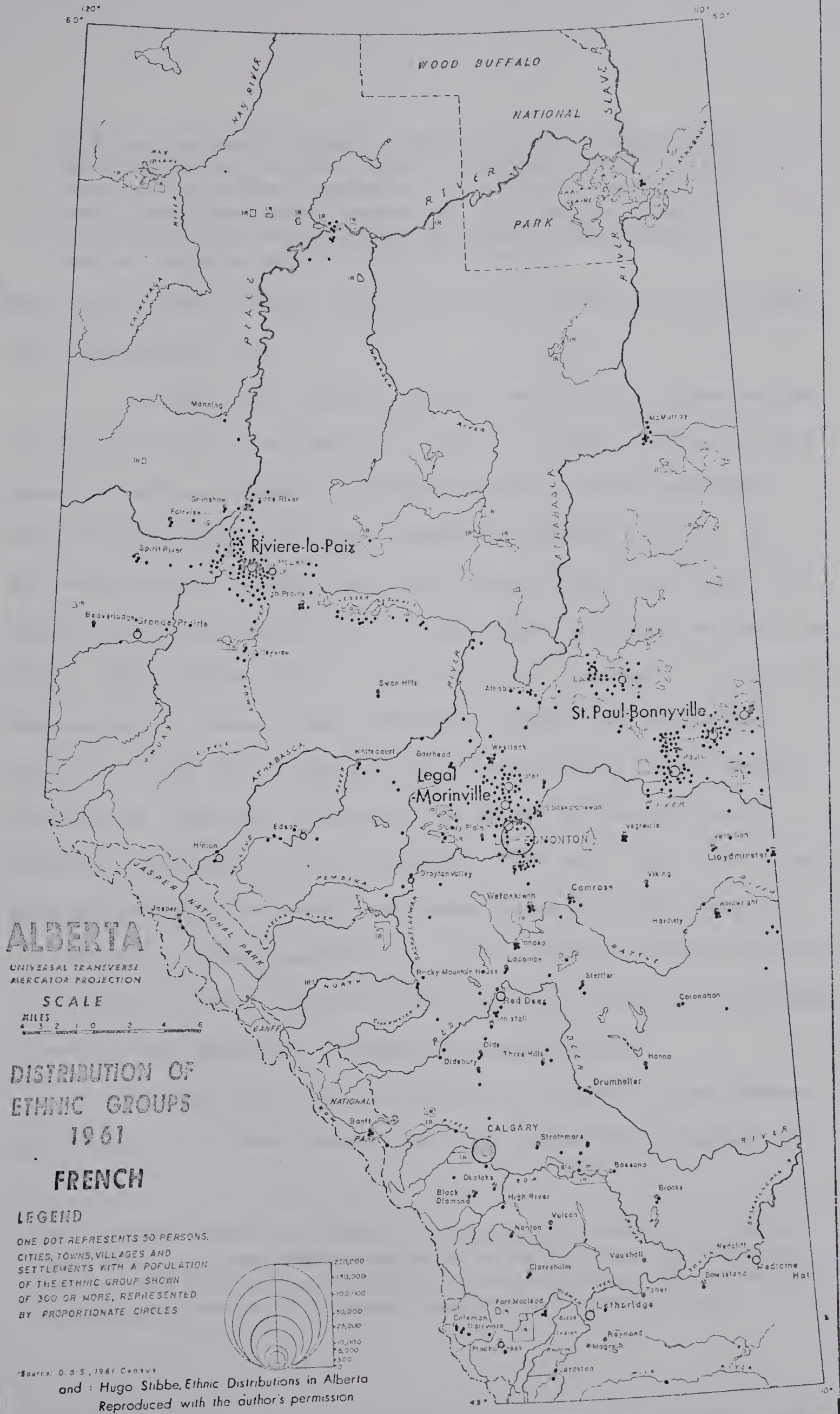


Figure 11

cultural geographic research. These are: (1) developmental, which emphasizes the time depth of such relatively long term processes as cultural evolution, origin and diffusion, cultural growth and retrogression; and (2) functional, which focuses on short term processes of cultural interaction, spatial organization, and flow or movement.

This present study involves culture areas and is more of the functional than developmental type.

A culture area "forms a definable unit in space characterized by relative internal homogeneity in regard to certain criteria, by some system of internal movement co-extensive with it, or by interaction among elements within its limits" (Wagner and Mikesell, 1962, p. 9). The indices used to delimit small scale culture areas have ranged from cattle collars and playing cards to house types and speech peculiarities (Weiss, 1962; Kniffen, 1936). In the study area, however, no distinctive features such as these, other than church steeples and place names, exist; or if they do can only be readily identified by trained anthropologists or linguists. Furthermore the French in Alberta have not produced a distinctive cultural landscape.¹ (V. Hull, 1965). The French have settled under the township and range system, carrying on agricultural activities found generally in the area, and not building different style houses or barns. Attention must therefore be directed to phenomena of much broader importance - language and ethnic origin.

"The fact that full participation in a given culture demands participation in a given community built on communication suggests the

¹ "The cultural landscape connotes the geographic content of a determined area, or a geographic complex of a certain type, in which the choices made and the changes worked by men as members of some cultural community are manifested" (Wagner and Mikesell, 1962, p. 10).

availability of a rough index to cultural distribution in the distribution of linguistic communities" (Wagner and Mikesell, 1962, pp. 7-8). In Canada, the French language group and the French ethnic (origin) group are usually considered as one and the same, though in the Census the number of people who claim French as their mother tongue is usually a little less than those claiming it as their origin group. This constant difference can be explained by those people of French ancestry who grew up, for one reason or another, using English. The French origin group, however, is the only one with a satisfactory and consistent level of reporting in the Census (Ryder, 1955, p. 475). "Ethnicity is determined by descent from ancestors who shared a common culture based on natural origins, language, religion, or race, or a combination of these" (Vallee, 1969, p. 83). The intention in this present study is to delimit a French culture area (region) based on French language and origin, and then to determine whether it is truly a geographic region, that is, one in which the variation in the characteristics considered is significantly different from the surrounding area. Moreover, all sections within the region should have the same point or points of focus.

Delimiting a culture area based on language alone tells us little about the dynamics of the area; about how the people within the region behave. For a more meaningful analysis the concept of areal functional organization will be used. This concept was defined by A.K. Philbrick (1957a,b) and employed by his student R.H. Brown in several Minnesota studies (1957, 1967); though it is apparently by no means new. "Platt, in virtually all his published studies since 1928, has demonstrated that almost any unit of organization, whether economic, politi-

cal or social, can be studied from a geographical point of view in terms of its areal boundaries, point or points of focus, distributional patterns, interconnections and genetic development." (Brown, 1957, p. 6).

In introducing areal functional organization, Philbrick believed that society "may be studied geographically in its spatial or distributional aspects through functional classification of the activities of persons" and that it "has a functional structure in area which is perhaps best referred to as human organization of area" (Philbrick, 1957a). The concept is that human activity is focused on the establishment or unit of occupance, e.g. farm field, domicile, farm, mine, store and factory, and that these establishments, by transportation and communication, by contracts, ownership, adherence to ideas, loyalties and faith, become interconnected. This interconnection can be either parallel, that is between establishments having the same function, or nodal, that is between establishments of different type and function. The latter gives rise to a nodal area consisting of several different uniform areas that are connected to a focal point.

An example of a small nodal area is a single farm that consists of several unlike fields (each of them a uniform area) which are organized around the farmstead which functions as a node. A larger nodal area would be the trade area of a village which consists of diverse uniform areas (Farms, residential areas, commercial areas) all tied to the village as a trading centre (Alexander, 1963, p. 627).

Two hypotheses follow from these principles. Areas and functions are found in a nested-hierarchical system characterized by successive alternation in the type of areal organization: from uniform to nodal to uniform, and so continuing. The second is that different and distinctive patterns of areal organization may exist for economic, political

and social activities.

The aim then is to apply at least part of this concept to the study area in the hope of determining whether the nature of nodal areas is affected by the presence of sizable cultural-linguistic groups, whether cultural communities acknowledged to be closely knit are united spatially; and therefore whether or not a geographic approach provides an insight into the survival of ethnic groups.

Several writers are of the opinion that the answers to the above type questions are most certainly positive:

Each such (ethnic) group tends to have a culture in part its own, a design for living moulded by its history guiding the daily behavior of its members, and making them recognizably different from members of other ethnic groups in the ways they act, think or feel (Ryder, 1955, p. 469).

Linguistic heterogeneity is one of the most obvious, most absolute and most fixed categories of diversity that apply to human populations. The sharp discontinuities and the relative uniform blocs that characterize modern linguistic communities strongly influence human behavior, and particularly the association of people and their integration. Political, social and economic patterns of these phenomena tend to co-incide strikingly with areal patterns (Wagner, 1958, p. 220).

It is not clear whether the above statements were meant to apply to such a limited area as the one in question, but nonetheless they do provide a starting point. The writer does not expect the influence of language and ethnicity to be as marked in the study area as is suggested above, but does expect, assuming that the French are a closely knit group, that they will behave as a unit, with a central focus, especially in the social sphere.

The Study Area

The extent of the study area was determined by examining Census figures on ethnic origin and mother tongue at the enumeration

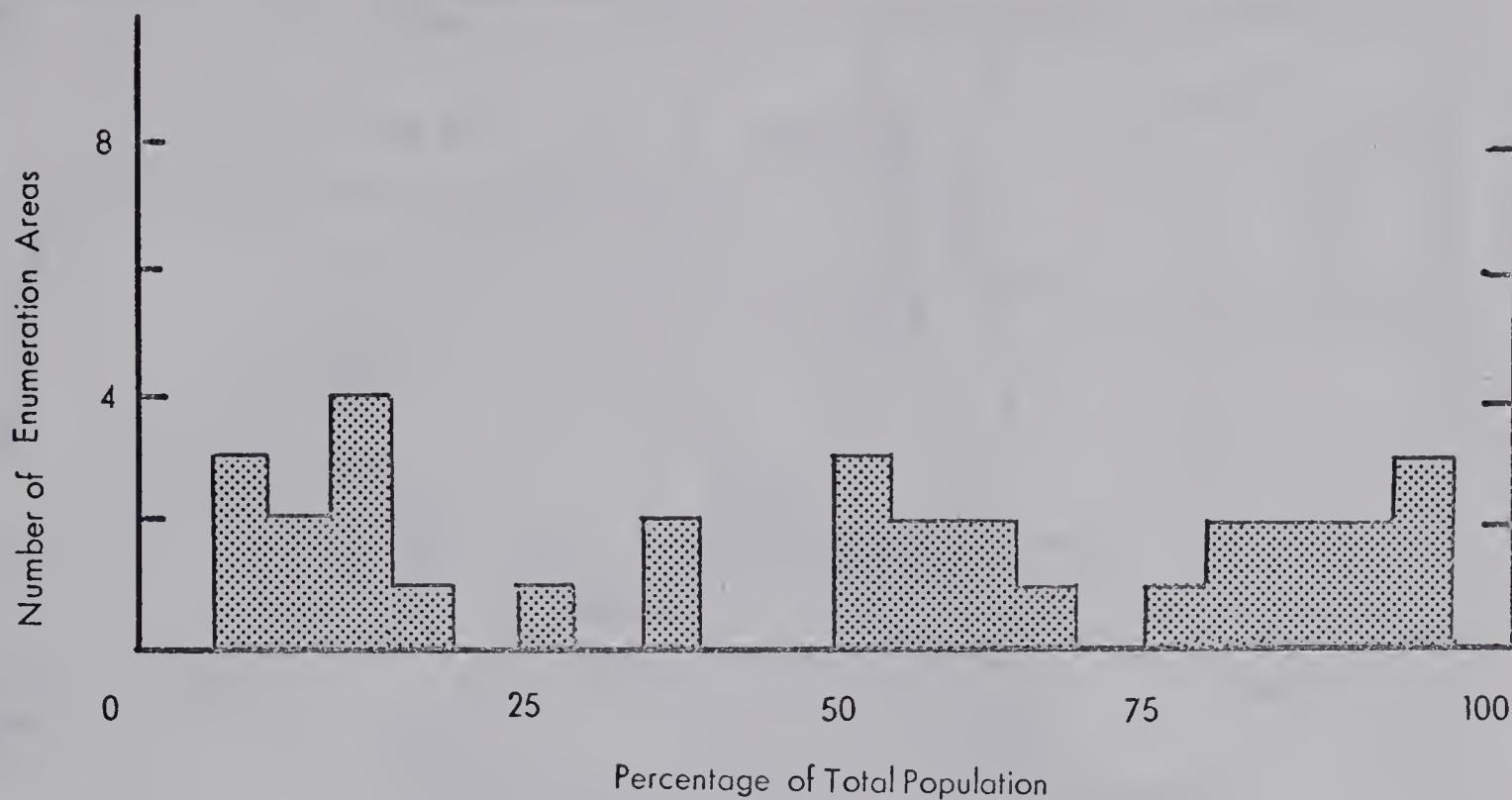
area level for the entire eastern and central Peace River Region. On the basis of the accompanying graphs (Figures 1.2 and 1.3), a lower limit of fifty per cent French origin and forty-five per cent French mother tongue was chosen to define the study area.² Below these limits there are no clusters of predominantly French enumeration areas. Several townships on the margins of the study area were also included to give it a more uniform shape and provide valuable comparative data (Figures 1.5 and 1.6). In this study area - the enumeration areas with over fifty per cent of their population of French origin (hereafter known as the French Area), and several townships on their margins - the field work part of the inquiry was carried out; reference will be made at times, however, to the surrounding area.

Method

The material and data used in this thesis were gathered during several trips to the Peace in the summer of 1969. The bulk of the data was obtained by the use of a household questionnaire; personal interviews being conducted with a responsible member of the household. Only rural households were involved and to ensure that they were located at varying distances from the town of Falher, widely advertised as the French capital of the Peace, a stratified random sample was used. Two households per township were sampled. Each was drawn from a different section within the township, sections being chosen using a random number table (Gregory, S., 1962, p. 91) in conjunction with the township and range grid pattern. One section was thus chosen from the thirty-six in the

² It should be remembered that enumeration areas are not always uniform with respect to population distribution and density.

EASTERN PEACE RIVER REGION

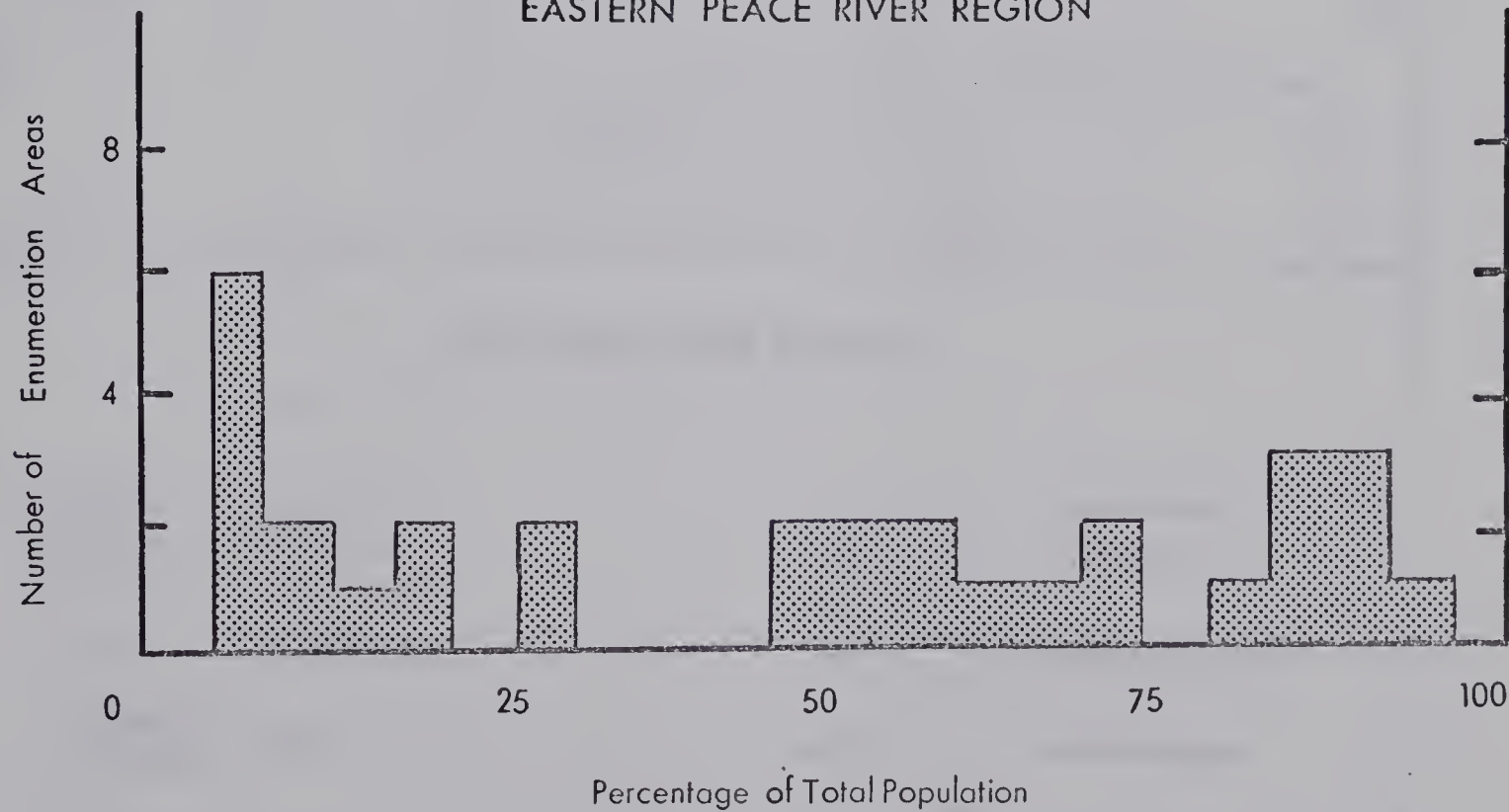


PROPORTION OF POPULATION OF FRENCH ORIGIN

BY RURAL ENUMERATION AREA

1961

EASTERN PEACE RIVER REGION



PROPORTION OF POPULATION OF FRENCH MOTHER TONGUE

BY RURAL ENUMERATION AREA 1961

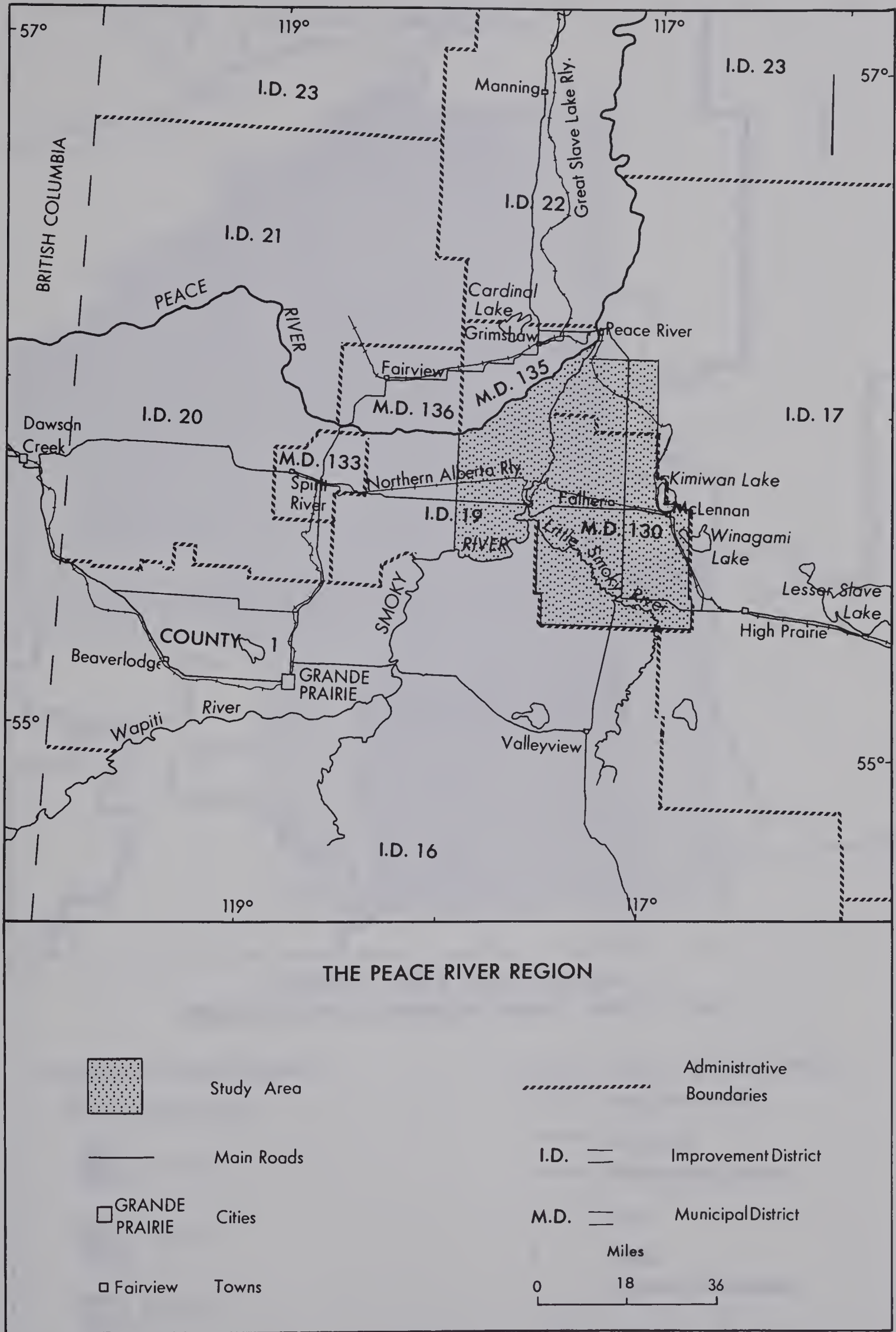


Figure 1.4

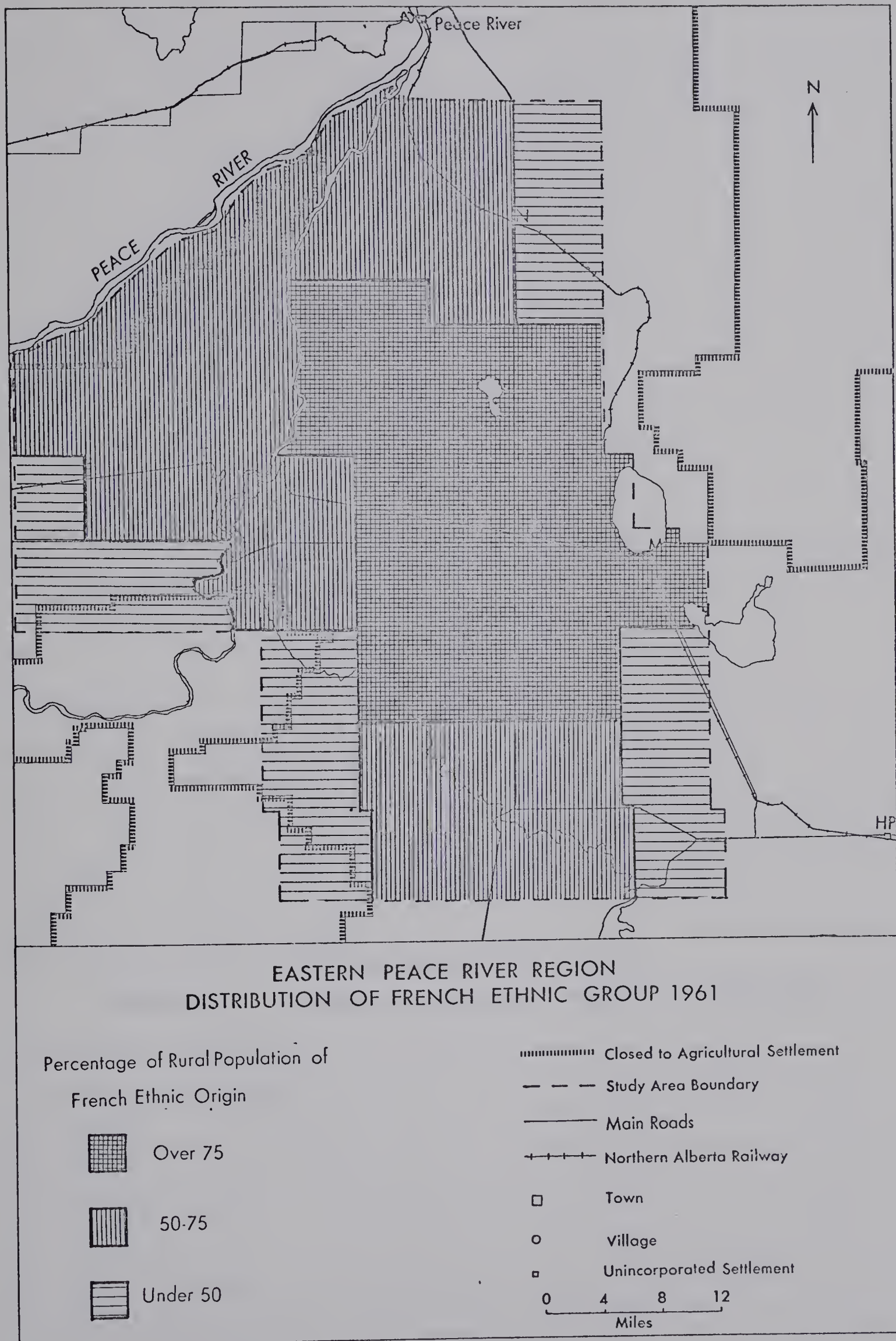


Figure 1.5

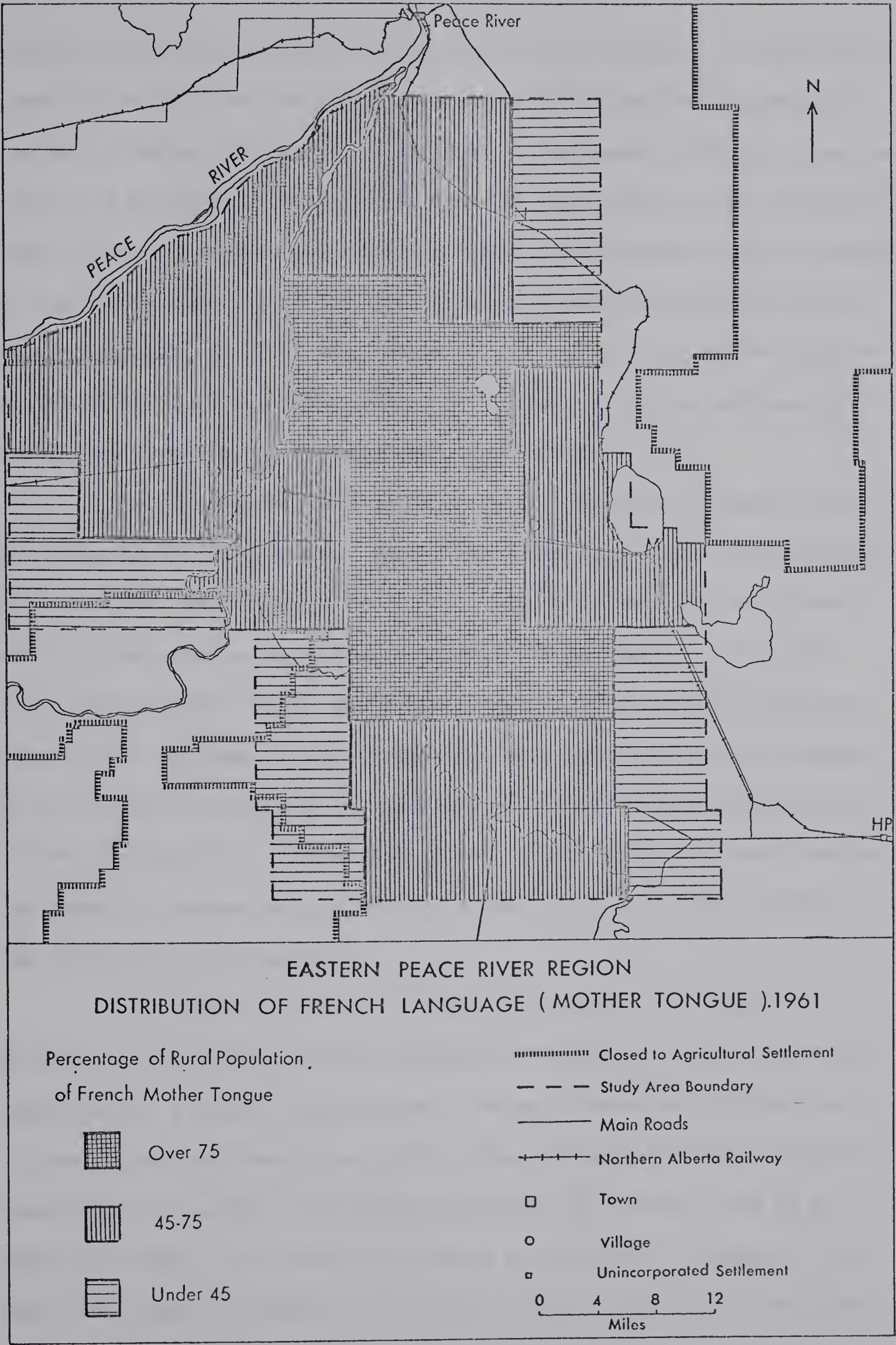


Figure 1.6

township, and the household on this section was visited. If there was no household on this section (this was usually determined beforehand with the help of maps and local officials) or if the persons within refused to answer, as happened four times, then the next number in the table was used, and the procedure was continued until a householder was interviewed. If there were two or more farmsteads on the selected section, but this rarely happened, the following priority with respect to quarter sections was established: S.E., S.W., N.W., N.E. A second section and household within the township was chosen in the same manner.

Interviews were conducted in English or French, depending on the respondent's preference. Ninety-one valid interviews were conducted (Figure 1.8). According to the 1966 Census there were 390 rural households in the study area, making the sample 23 per cent of the total. About 150 of these "rural" households, however, were found in seven unincorporated villages (assuming that one household contains 4.5 persons on the average) which were not considered when the sample was selected but were included in the Census figures. Taking this into consideration the number of households sampled was 38 per cent of the total number of the strictly rural households.

The sample stood up to a number of checks. The number of children in each family (sample household) was used to verify that the sample showed a normal distribution. The mean number of children was 4.7 with a standard deviation of 3.2. Over 68 per cent of the sampled households fell within one standard deviation of the mean, and 99 per cent fell within two standard deviations of the mean. In terms of distance from Falher a bimodal distribution occurs. This can be explained

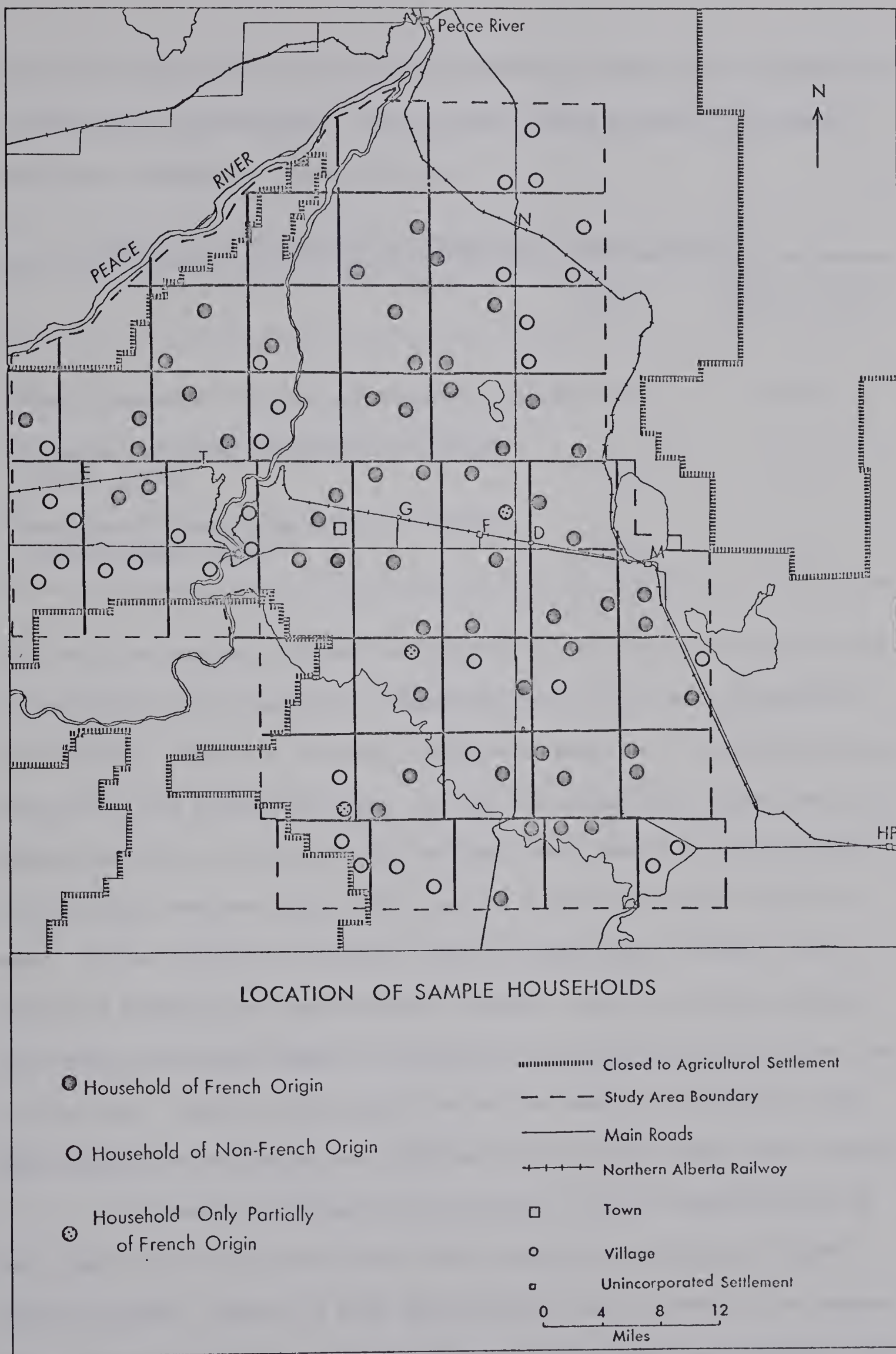


Figure 1.8

by the fact that Falher is not at the geometric center of the study area; an unavoidable circumstance. The following table compares the sample with Census figures of the study area:

Table 1.1 - Comparison of Sample and Census Figures		
	Census	Sample (1969)
Average Number of Persons per Household (1966)	4.532	4.829
Percentage of Total Population of French Origin (1961)	65.0	63.7
Percentage of Total Population of French Mother Tongue (1961)	62.1	63.7

The "test for population mean" was applied to the data on household size to determine if the sample was representative of the total population (see Blalock, 1960, pp. 141-49). The sample mean was 1.1 standard errors larger than the population mean. At the .05 significance level the null hypothesis (that a random sample had been taken) would be rejected only if the result was more than 1.65 standard deviations larger than the mean. It was therefore concluded that the sample was unbiased. The method of sampling gave some people a greater choice of being selected than others since the number of households per township differs from one to the next. However, the large size of the sample in relation to the whole population minimizes any difficulties that this might have created.

A second questionnaire was mailed to thirty organizations in the study area to supplement the field research, two-thirds of these being returned. Copies of each questionnaire can be found in the appendix. Other material was gathered by means of personal conversation with

people in the study area, especially "old timers" and Municipal District officials, and by field observation. Unless otherwise noted, all data dealing with the total population were obtained from the Census of Canada, 1961 and 1966. Enumeration area level data were made available in the Population Lab. of the Sociology Department at the University of Alberta.

CHAPTER II

PHYSICAL, HISTORICAL & POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY AREA

The study area is some 280 miles northwest of Edmonton in the east central Peace River District. It covers more than 1700 square miles and its extreme dimensions are 60 miles north-south and 48 miles east-west. Natural features form the study area boundaries only in the northwest - the Peace River - and in the extreme southwest - a forested area closed to agricultural settlement. The study area consists of three sub-areas - the Smoky River Municipal District, the Tangent area, and the Nampa district.

Physical Features

For the most part the study area has a level to undulating topography varying in height from 1800 to 2200 feet above sea level and with few steep slopes. The surface is occasionally broken by low ridges, knolls or depressions. However, the most outstanding topographical features are the deeply incised valleys of the Peace, Smoky and Little Smoky rivers. These valleys are as much as 600 feet below the general surface level and are from one to four miles wide. The bed of the Peace itself is one quarter of a mile wide. These three rivers are the only permanent streams in the area. Their banks are usually covered with alluvial deposits. There are three large lakes - Winagami, Kimiwan, and Magloire - which are replenished chiefly by runoff from limited local catchment areas and are stagnant or receding for much of the year. Depressional, poorly drained areas, dry in midsummer, and often containing an accumulation of sedge-peat are found north of Girouxville, south of Culp and around Eaglesham (Odynsky, 1952, p. 3).

The natural vegetation consisted of a mixed tree cover dominated

by aspen poplar and interspersed with areas of prairie. Numerous forest fires have reduced both the amount of tree cover and the associated animal population (Odynsky, 1950, p. 23).

General Population Characteristics

In 1966 nearly 70 per cent of the study area's population was classed as rural, of whom 86 per cent were farm residents. The urban population is found in five centers - McLennan, Falher, Girouxville, Nampa and Donnelly. The study area also has seven unincorporated places, only one of which has a population of over one hundred. The following two tables give the salient population figures.

Table 2.1 - Study Area Population Data

		Study Area	French Area
Total Population	1966	8903	7404
	1961	9172	7556
Rural Population	1966	6114	4903
	1961	6475	5130
Rural Population	1961		
French Origin		4211 (65.0%)	3957 (77.1%)
French Mother Tongue		4019 (62.1%)	3816 (74.4%)

Rural population density is greatest around Falher, Girouxville, Jean Côté and Tangent, and least on the northwest and southern edges of the study area.

Table 2.2 - Population Data of Study Area Towns

Incorporated Towns	Population		Percentage French Origin	Percentage French Mother Tongue
	1966	1961	1961	1961
McLennan	1104	1078	42	32
Falher	843	741	88	85
Girouxville	305	318	86	86
Nampa	288	271	17	9
Donnelly	249	289	91	84

The Post Office Householders Directory provides ethnic origin figures in addition to those available in the Census. In 1967, 1245 out of the 1810 boxholders (69 per cent) in the area were listed as "French". The post offices which had a predominantly French list of subscribers were Donnelly, Falher, Girouxville and Jean Cote, while Culp and Watino were largely non-French. Tangent, Eaglesham and McLennan were more or less equally divided while no figures were listed for Nampa.

The farmers of the study area grow mainly grains - barley, wheat, oats, rape, flax and grass seed. Very few cattle are kept, but there are occasional farmers concentrating on pigs. The area is the major honey-producing region of the province, though it appears that while the hives are found on the farms the beekeepers are townsfolk who rent the space.

History of Settlement

The Peace River district was one of the last large areas of the West to be settled and as such is still regarded as the classic

agricultural frontier. Like other parts of the Prairies the vanguard of settlement comprised traders, trappers, adventurers and missionaries, many of whom were French Canadian. In 1866 Father Tessier established a Roman Catholic mission at Fort Dunvegan, and in 1883 Father Grouard built a log cabin and church at the same site. After the railroad reached Edmonton in 1890 the first settlers began moving into the Peace by way of the Athabasca and Lesser Slave rivers and across Lesser Slave Lake to Grouard. "By 1903 there was a fairly large and growing settlement to the northwest of Lesser Slave Lake", and until the railroad reached the area in 1915 "Grouard was a large and busy center serving as a port of entry for much of this large and undeveloped area" (Odynsky, 1950, pp. 9-10). The Lesser Slave and Big Prairie settlements grew near Grouard, but because of the limited local market only a little farming was done. The grain and vegetables were of excellent quality, however (Wyatt, 1935, p. 10).

Around 1910 Fathers Falher and Giroux brought a number of French Canadians to the Eastern Peace via the Athabasca-Slave Lake Trail. Many of them had been working in the New England textile mills. The Donnelly-Falher area "was more or less wooded and rather low and wet in places" (Wyatt, 1935, p. 10) and the open country north of the Peace, west of the Smoky, and around High Prairie was settled first. Father Falher, however, who had been at Grouard since 1889, wrote the following in a letter to W.D. Albright of Beaverlodge sometime after 1909:

The district around Falher was known as the 'Happy Hunting Ground' of the Indians, because of the large number of fox found in the district, where cayuses wintered in the open on great quantities of peavine. This area was known to the missionaries long before it was surveyed by Mr. Selby in 1909, when he reports that this district was the richest he

had found in the West. Moreover as the Indian trail from British Columbia led from Lesser Slave Lake through this district, I was persuaded as were others that in time the railway would run over this area, since it had been the policy of the railroads in the whole of Canada to follow these Indian trails. The fact that Falher is in the Peace River district - the center of attraction for so many - had weight also in my mind to start some settlement there. Then it was considered that Falher was in the passage of mild Chinook winds and this was too another advantage. (Industrial Development Branch, 1967, p. 2)

The parish of Falher was established in 1912 with the first resident priest, Rev. Jean Marie Dreau, arriving the next year. The railroad reached McLennan in 1915 and Falher the following year, but ran several miles north of the original townsite. When the present townsite was surveyed in 1919, Bishop Grouard sent Rev. J.A. Ouellette to establish a Catholic center at Falher (Industrial Development Branch, 1967, p. 3). Settlement took place in the more open country adjacent to Falher, much of which had been cleared by a fire in 1902. This area had the soils with the highest agricultural potential in the area east of the Smoky and settlement expanded from this fertile core and easily cleared land to areas of heavy clearing and more difficult areas (Figures 2.1 to 2.5).

The main migration to the area took place between 1926 and 1930, with the peak coming in 1928. This was a movement of French Canadian farmers who came West to farm, and consequently this was a period of great increase in the number of farms. All the new settlers foresaw a rural way of life, even those few Montrealers who came in the 1930's. Most of the settlers came from the Lac St. Jean, Gaspé and Bas de Fléuvre regions of Quebec, some directly and some via Northeast Alberta, Saskatchewan, New England, and later the Clay Belt.

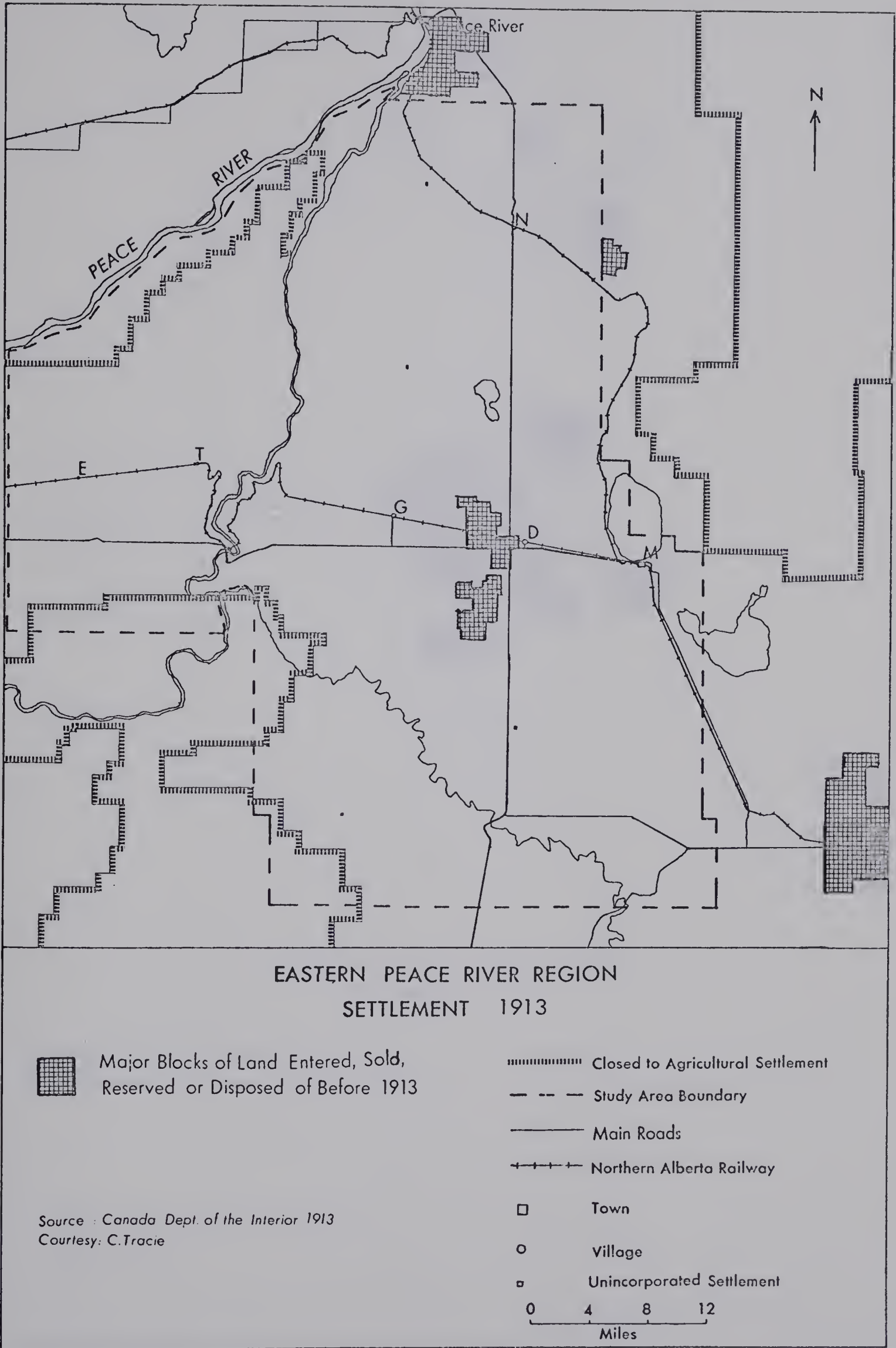


Figure 2.1

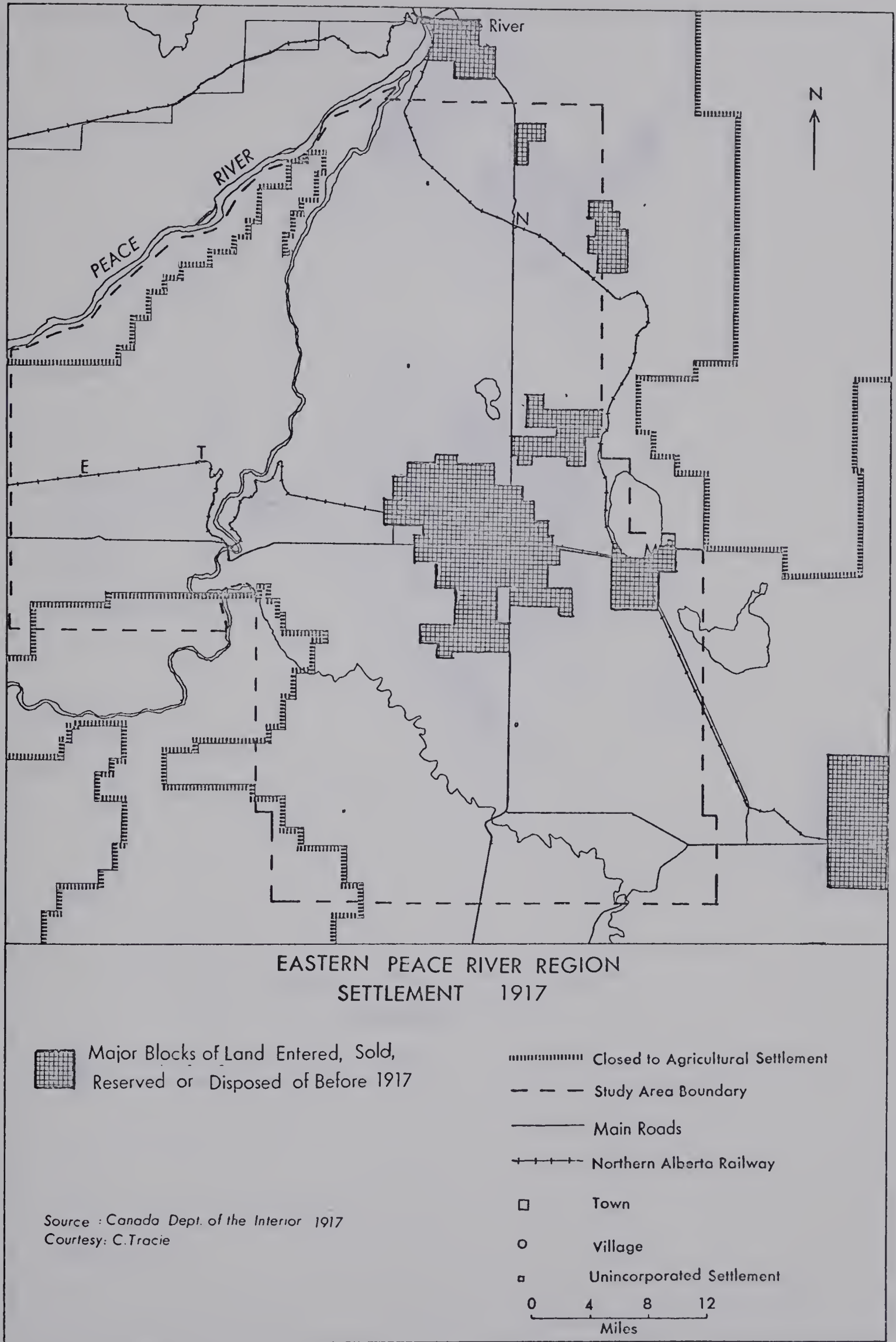


Figure 2.2

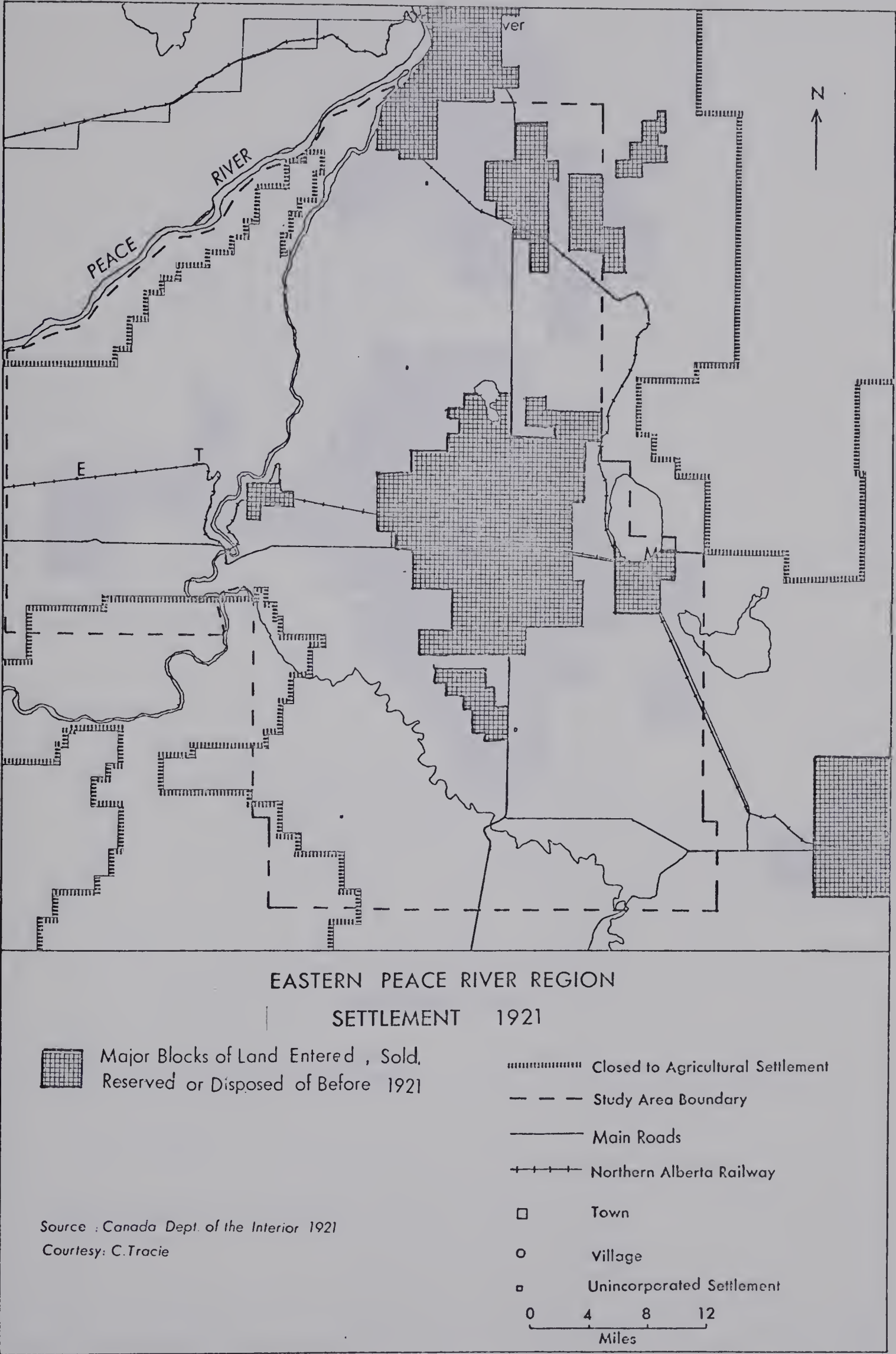


Figure 2.3

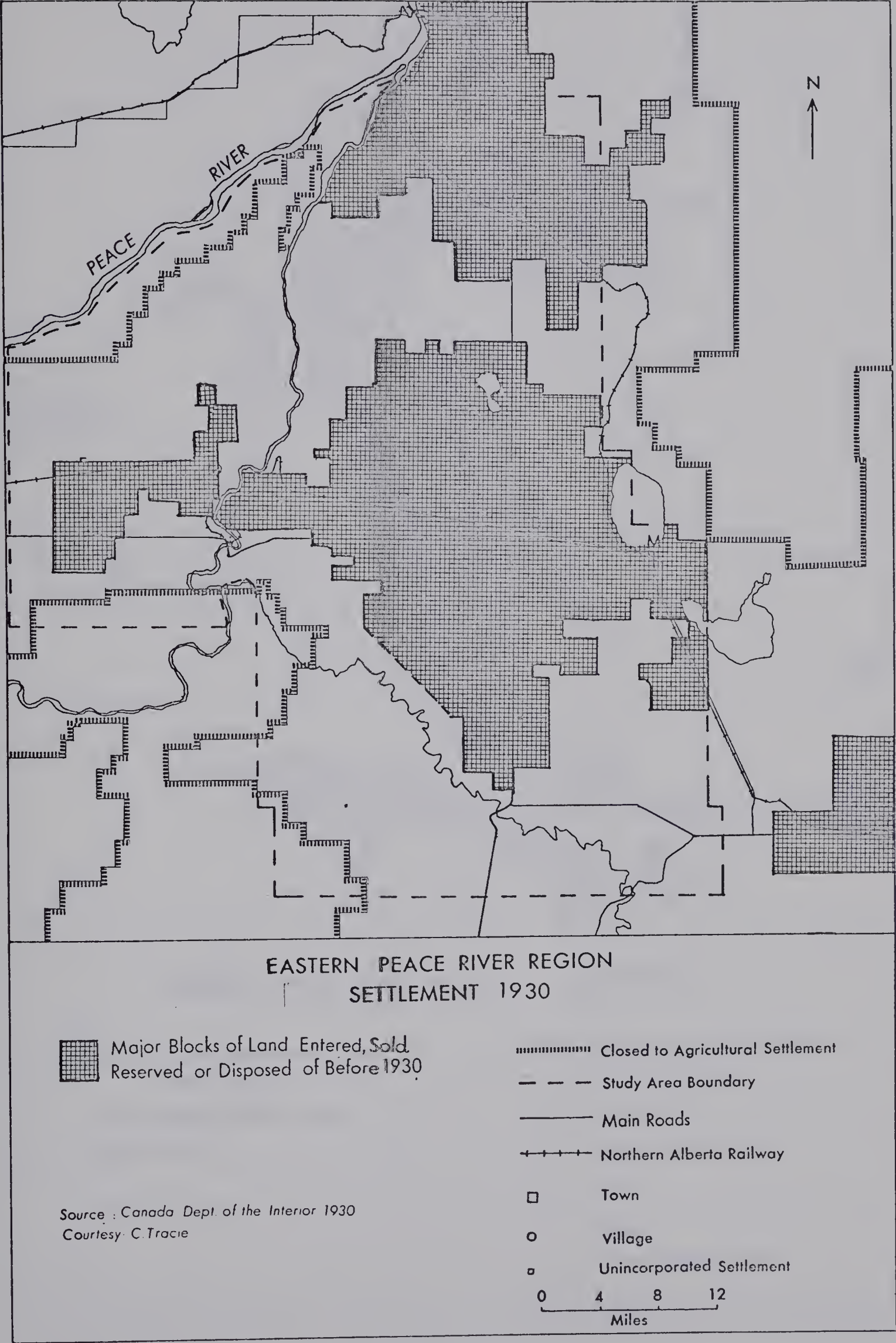


Figure 2.4

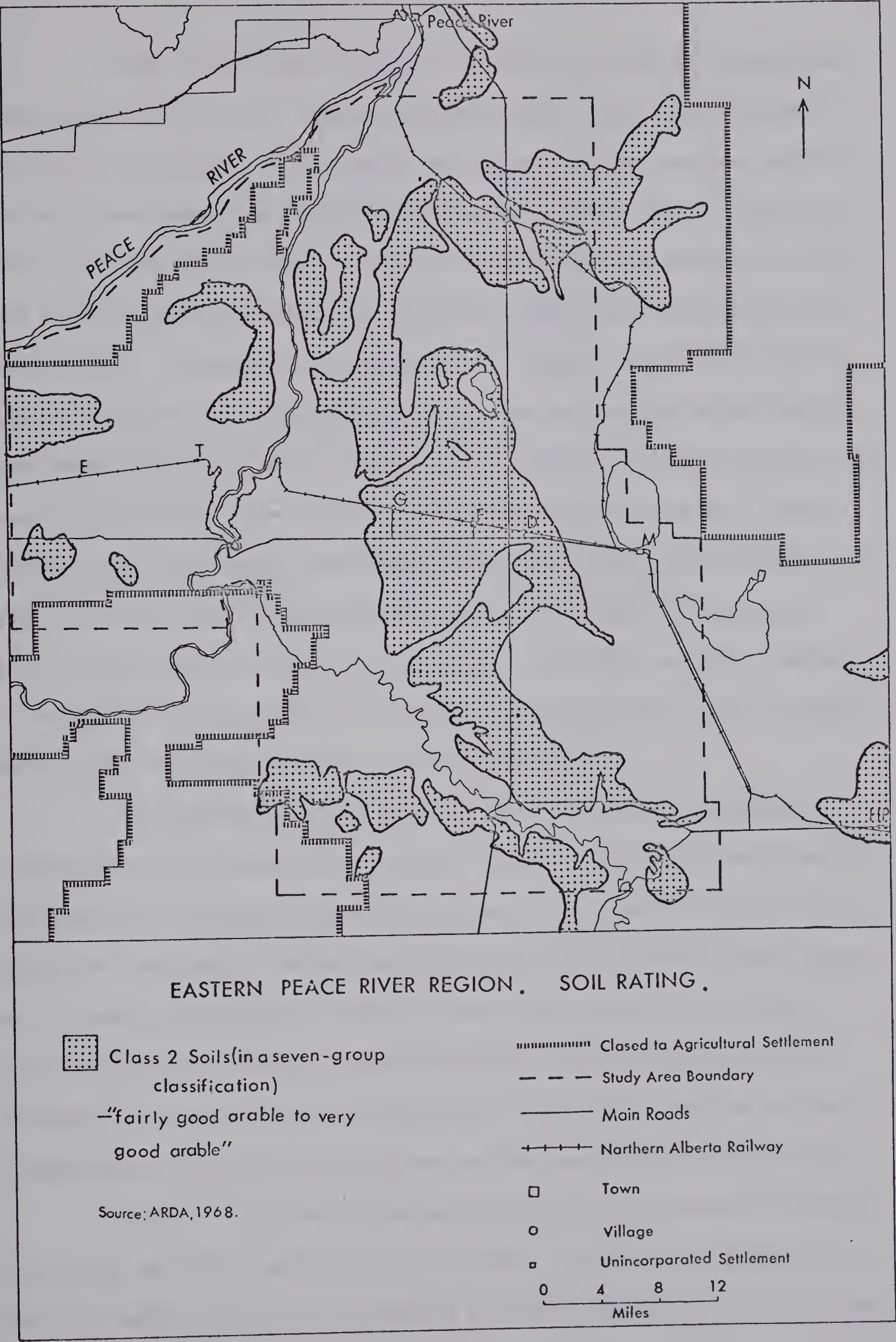


Figure 2.5

Some of the French settlers of the late twenties crossed the Smoky and settled in the Tangent-Eaglesham area, and others followed during the Depression. All French settlement in this area was north of the main east-west road linking McLennan with Spirit River. Watino in the valley had been a boom town with the coming of the railroad in 1916 and a few railroad workers, not of French origin, had taken homesteads in the area. A sawmill was established at Tangent in the early 1930's and in 1938 the soil potential for legume production was noted (Rural Development Research Branch, 1968, p. 3). The area north of Tangent was open to settlement after the War under the Veteran's Land Act (Lassiter Project) with the Federal Government responsible for land clearing. In the fifteen years following the War a number of people of Ukrainian origin moved into the valley of the Smoky (the Flats) and into the area on both sides of the valley. In 1954 a bridge was built over the Smoky and in 1966 the main east-west road was paved.

It was well into the thirties when the tide of settlement crossed the Little Smoky River south of Falher. This relatively fertile and presently prosperous area was originally reserved for settlers displaced by the drought during the Depression years, but was later opened up to general settlement. Several miles south of the Little Smoky, however, the soil potential declines rapidly, the population density decreases and the area is currently just being cleared and is one where homesteaders are trying to introduce cattle (see Figures 2.5 and 2.6).

Today in the Peace River area generally the number of farms is decreasing and their average size is growing, while in the French area both the number and size of farms are growing. New land is being opened

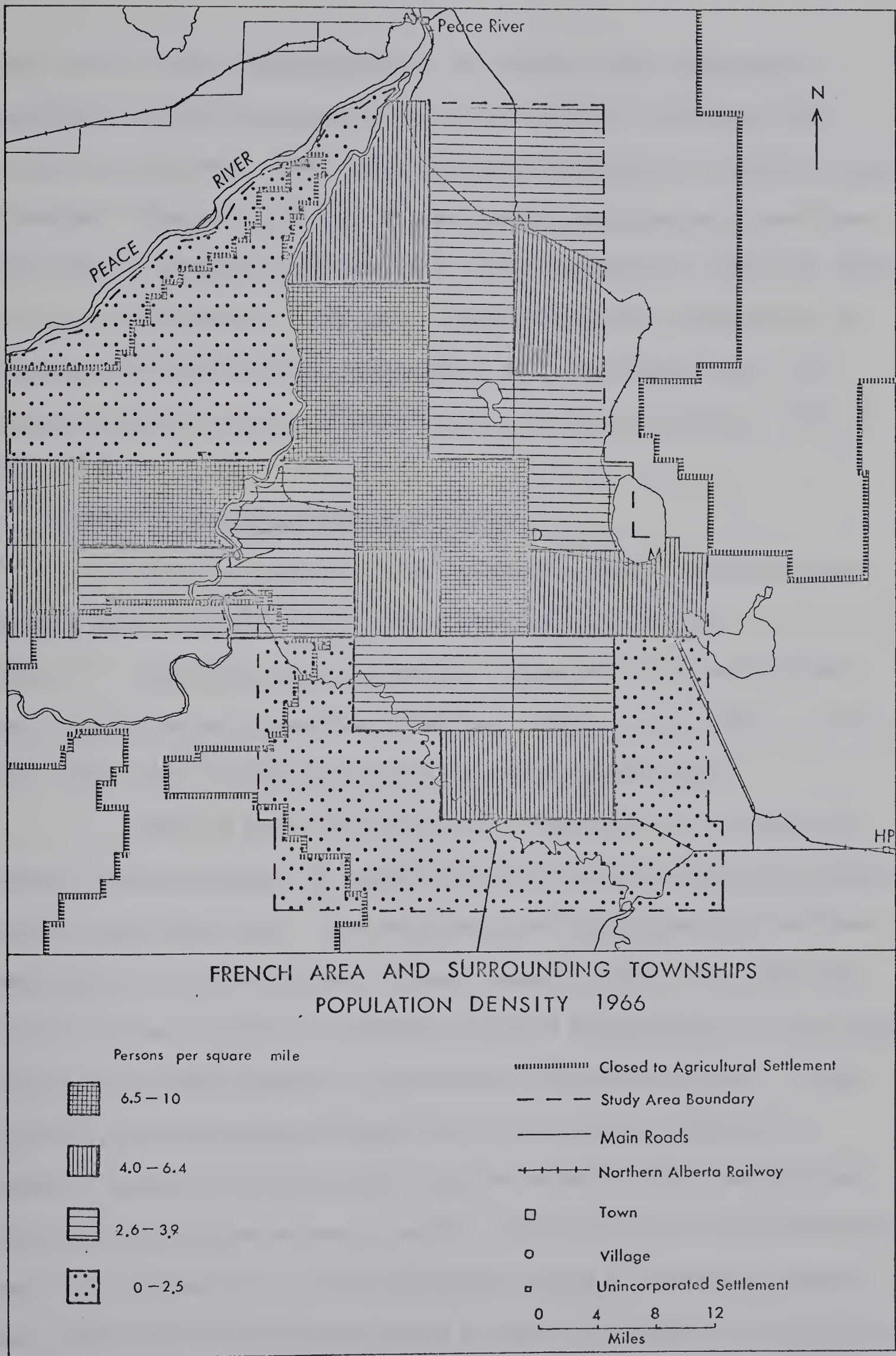


Figure 2.6

up by sons of long settled families, by farmers taking homesteads separated from the home quarter and by the trickle of settlers still coming into the area. Some French Canadian families are developing large "domaines" (from 20 to 30 quarter sections) through buying cleared land from people, usually non-French, who are leaving the area (Boileau, 1966, p. 16, and field work). The area is declining in total population, not because of a decline in the birth-rate - it is relatively high - but because of out-migration, especially of young people (Boileau, 1966, p. 25).

Reasons Behind the French Settlement

The large movement of French Canadians from 1926 to 1930 has usually been attributed to the fact that Quebec agriculture was "out of balance" - there were no organizations interested in farmers' problems - and to the promise of the Peace (Boileau, 1966, p. 11). There was, however, much more to French settlement in the West than this.

There has been relatively little agricultural settlement by French Canadians outside of Quebec, and migration from Quebec has mainly been to contiguous areas - the Near North and Eastern Ontario, Northern New Brunswick and New England. French Canadians have shown relatively little interest in Prairie settlement despite encouragement by the clergy who have long been involved in missionary work outside Quebec. In the 1840's Lord Durham had attributed the lack of French expansion to Quebec's failure to obtain tithes for the Catholic Church outside the Province (Lord Durham's Report, p. 92). With reference to the Prairies and to the latter part of the nineteenth century in particular Silver has argued that French Canadians had a lack of confidence in the land, a

fear of persecution and a conviction that only in and through Quebec could the French Canadian culture survive, and that these factors led to the belief that western settlement was the sole concern of Ontario (Silver, 1969, pp. 11-35). Rimbart, on the other hand, cites high travel costs and implies that these were intentional discouragements by the Federal Government (Rimbart, 1954, p. 82). In 1927 an English immigrant would have paid \$22 for passage to Winnipeg with children under seventeen travelling free; a farmer from the eastern United States \$25.25 from Montreal to Winnipeg; while a Quebecer would have to pay \$46.25 for himself and for each member of his family to reach Winnipeg (Rimbart, 1954, p. 82). The attraction was therefore much greater to the mills of New England than to the wheat fields of the Prairies.

Nonetheless some French Canadians did migrate to the Prairies and it was the "MISSIONNAIRE-COLONIZATEURS" - Lacombe and Grouard to name only two - who were the driving force behind such settlement. The impetus came from the West, not from Quebec, and the Church was deeply involved. At the turn of the century most of the good land in Quebec had been taken up and little more than subsistence agriculture could be practiced in the parishes being opened up (Boileau, 1966, p. 11). The appeals for settlers were very nationalistic, emphasizing that the West was part of Canada, was discovered by French Canadians, and that Quebec was "losing" in Western settlement and therefore in maintaining a French-English balance in Ottawa (see la Société de la Colonisation de la Rivière-la-Paix, 1900, pp. 5-6).

Migrating French Canadians, like other ethnic groups, and under the influence of their priests, have shown a tendency to segregate

in areas in which their own culture has been a dominant feature - St. Boniface, Gravelbourg, St. Paul-Bonnyville. They have had the natural desire to have as neighbours people possessing the same language, religion and general culture; have occupied certain townships and municipalities more or less solidly; and have been encouraged to maintain this homogeneity by local leaders interested in preserving the old ways, the language and the faith (Dawson, 1936, pp. 335-74).

Some migration out of old Quebec has been a calculated expression of the cultural revival. The founding of French Canadian pioneer villages outside the population ecumene was a favorite project of the late Premier Duplessis. These communities, sometimes made up of transplanted rural villagers, and sometimes inexperienced pioneers fresh from the cities, were encouraged to keep alive the traditional assets of French Canada, the basis of individualistic French Canadian culture. (McArthur and Gerland, 1961, p. 143).

French Canadians have sought to retain their language as the keystone to their nationalistic aspirations as a group in Canada. Their leaders have made it abundantly clear that loyalty to the French language joined to a loyalty to the Roman Catholic Church makes for a greater protection from the assimilating forces of the North American melting pot (with its great increase in secular interests) than could loyalty to the Church alone (Dawson, 1936, p. 373).

National strategy urged French Canadians to buy railroad land near other French Canadians rather than take a free homestead among strangers (Silver, 1969, p. 33).

The possibilities of an ethnic settlement surviving for much more than a generation in this day and age are few (McArthur and Gerland, 1961, p. 141). Rimbart wrote on the chances of the French Canadians being assimilated in New England, if I may translate freely:

If the Canados (French Canadians living in New England) did not bring with them architecture, painting, rich folklore, special techniques; and being opposed by commercialism, language, and religion; cut off from modern France, farther away from Quebec with each generation, and not having developed their own culture, their chances of surviving seem very small (Rimbart, 1954, p. 85).

There were, however, a few major differences between the French of New England and those of the Prairie Provinces. The New England setting was urban and commercial while the Prairies was rural and agricultural. Those prospective settlers interested solely in financial gain were discouraged from making the trip westward (Boileau, 1966, p. 11). Moreover the French Canadians on the Prairies seemed to be organized: organized around the Church. "Faith and language were the essentials of survival" and the parish "the custodian of the French traditions and the mother tongue" (Stanley, 1960, p. 332). The priests provided strong leadership and passed on to their congregations, from the pulpit, in the Church basement, and in the schools, a unity of purpose - LA SURVIVANCE. Other organizations aided in the pursuit of this goal. L'Association Canadienne Francaise d'Alberta was formed in 1925 and it assisted with the placing of competent teachers in bilingual schools, popularized singing and reading in French, and held annual courses and exams in French studies (Stanley, 1960, p. 333). In 1928 "La Survivance" (now called the "Franco-Albertain") began publication. It was preceded by a number of other French language weeklies out of Edmonton, the first having appeared in 1898. Farmers' clubs, handicraft schools, co-ops and "caisses populaire" were formed during the Depression when morale was low (Stanley, 1960, p. 333). During this period closer ties with Quebec were sought. And in 1949 CHFA, a French language Edmonton radio station was opened in response to the great language threat by English radio. A relay station, CBXY, was opened at Falher in the spring of 1969.

CHAPTER III

THE FRENCH AREA AS A REGION

The extent of the study area was determined with the use of basically only two criteria - ethnic origin and mother tongue - which for the purposes at hand have been treated as one - ethnicity. The area with over fifty per cent of its population of French origin (and over forty-five per cent of its population of French mother tongue) has been called the FRENCH AREA. This single factor or single trait region can be divided into two sub-regions: the FRENCH CORE which occupies the central part of the study area, and the FRENCH PERIPHERY which is found to the south, west, and north of the core, with seventy-five per cent French origin being the divisional point (Figure 3.1). The study area then consists of three sub-regions: the Core, the Periphery, and the non-French townships¹ though there is little basis for calling the latter a sub-region.

Regions have long figured in geographic inquiry, but have also played a part in other disciplines. Culture areas and culture regions are presumably very similar; it is only the emphasis that differs.

The culture area concept owes its origin to anthropologists who emphasize the core of the primitive area....But the delineation of culture areas of modern society by statistical methods rests primarily upon the fact that the fabric of modern culture is composed of variable traits that are correlated among themselves. This is not to say that all cultural traits are significantly correlated, but clusters of them are, and if it were not so culture areas would possess little meaning. (Gregory, C.L., 1949, p. 59)

In this chapter an attempt will be made to discover if the

¹ This differs from Boileau's (1966) divisions in the only other geographical work on the French in the Peace. He used Municipal District 130 as his BLOC FRANCAIS and a triangle between Spirit River, Jousard, and Peace River as the SECTEUR FRANCAIS. Virtually all of his article is concerned with the former, perhaps because it is a census sub-division.

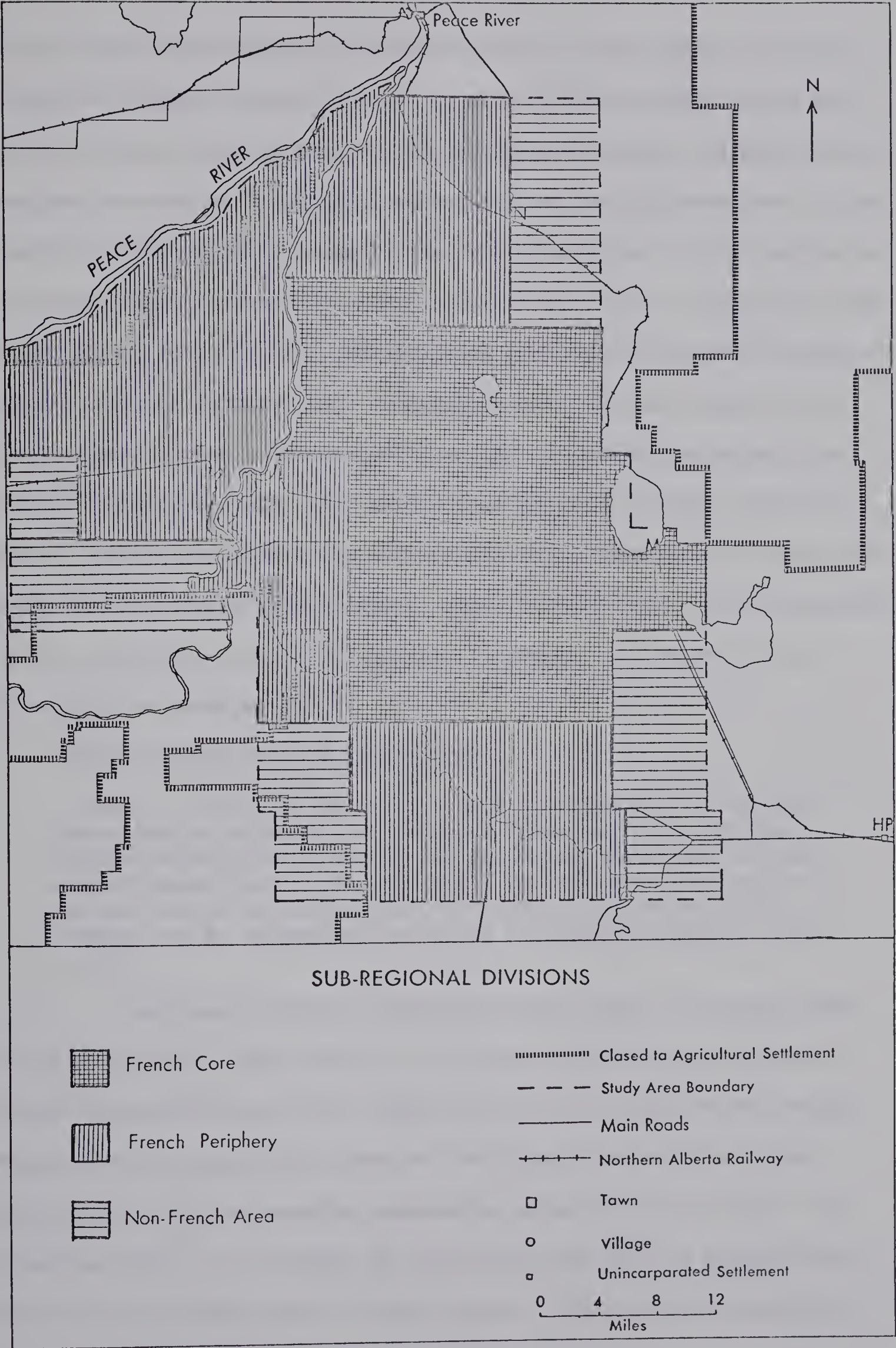


Figure 3.1

French Area is significantly different from the surrounding area to be called a "multiple feature region" or even a "total region," types progressively more complex than the single feature region, and thus test the regional boundaries. Multiple feature regions are differentiated on the basis of combinations or associations of features and total regions are differentiated in terms of the entire content of human occupancy of area (Whittlesey, 1954, p. 27). The division between the Core and the Periphery will also be examined. Geographers have normally looked for relationships between such physical features as geology, topography and soils, economic features such as land use and type of farm, and such social features as population characteristics. Unfortunately, from the point of view of the present study, most of the Census figures available at the enumeration area level pertain to population characteristics. These will be examined first.

Distinctiveness of the French Area

There is thus the implication of a relationship between the data used to establish the regional frame and the areal dispersion within that frame of the data which describes the regional properties. This hypothesis can be tested statistically by appropriate techniques and the validity of the regional pattern can be objectively accepted or rejected (Zobler, 1957, p. 83).

The French Area was delineated on the basis of origin alone; those enumeration areas with over fifty per cent of the population of French origin are part of it, others are not. The mean French origin figure for the enumeration areas of the French Area is 76 per cent, while that of the surrounding enumeration areas is 11 per cent. The intention here is to discover if the French Area differs significantly from the surrounding area in other respects. This will be achieved by

comparing census figures for the eighteen enumeration areas of the French Area with those of eighteen surrounding enumeration areas through the use of the 't' test of significance of difference of means. This test is used to determine whether the means of two normal populations are significantly different. It involves the setting up of a null hypothesis (in these cases that there is no significant difference between the data tested for the two areas), the obtaining of a 't' score, and accepting or rejecting the null hypothesis on the basis of a published table relating 't' scores and degrees of freedom (Gregory, S., 1962, p. 127). Zobler used the chi-square test in his regional analysis, but the 't' test is more useful here because of the varying form of the data. Several social phenomena were tested and the results are shown in the accompanying table.

Table 3.1 - 't' Test Results for Various Characteristics

	Mean Values		't' Value	Degrees of Freedom	Degree of Significance
	French Area	Surrounding Area			
Rural Population Density (persons per square mile)	4.7	2.5	2.26	34	<5.0%
Family Size	5.422	4.512	4.84	34	<0.1%
Number of Persons Under 15 Years of Age per Household	2.03	1.68	26.6	34	<0.1%
Number of Persons Over 45 Years of Age per Household	.83	1.11	2.54	34	<5.0%
Percent of Population Completed Third Year High School	5.49	8.03	1.7	34	>5.0%

The French Area has a greater rural population density, larger families, a greater number of young people and fewer older people per household, and a lower percentage of people who have finished third year high school; but the test shows that there is a possibility that the latter is due to chance, the 5 per cent figure being critical. In the other cases however the spatial patterns between the two areas differ significantly; the null hypothesis is rejected. The reasons for these differences can only be speculated upon. On the northeast, south and southwest sides of the French Area the land is either just in the process of being cleared or is not open to homesteading at all. The soils here (grey wooded) are less fertile than those found in the more densely settled areas (dark grey wooded). The size of the family is often related to the influence of the Roman Catholic Church, though this influence may have started to wane. The accompanying map shows that the proportion of Roman Catholics declines away from the Core (Figure 3.2). A population pyramid compares the age and sex structure for the French Area and the surrounding area (Figure 3.3). It reinforces the fact that the French Area generally has a larger percentage of its population in the younger age groups but has relatively few older people. This could be due to the fact that the French Area was settled a little later than some of the surrounding area, or there could be a greater tendency among French people to move to the larger towns and cities in their later years.

Data on agriculture and on farm type are only available at the census subdivision level. Smoky River Municipal District, which contains all of the French Core, part of the Periphery, and a small part of the surrounding English area, is a census subdivision. All that can be done

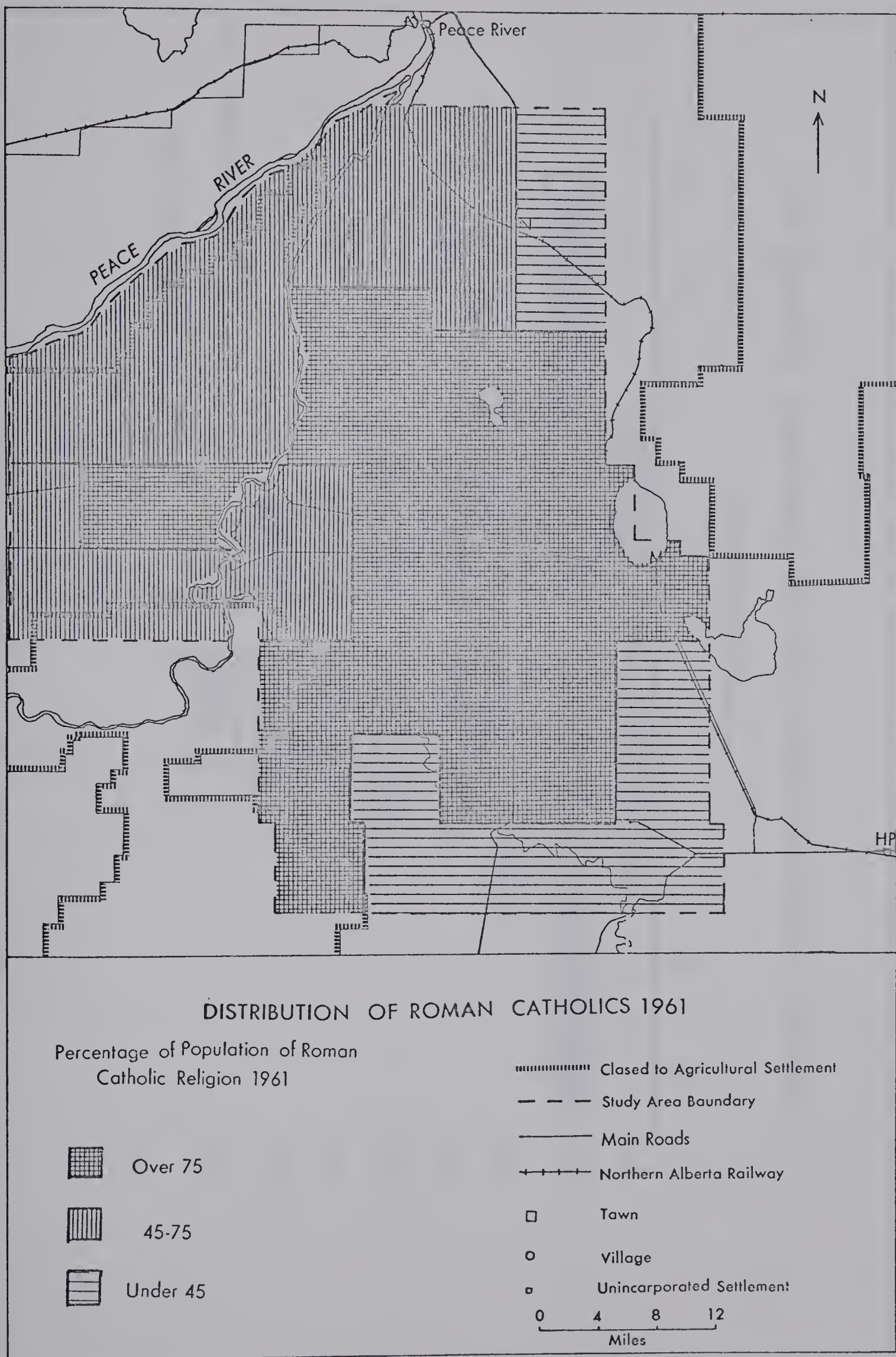


Figure 3.2

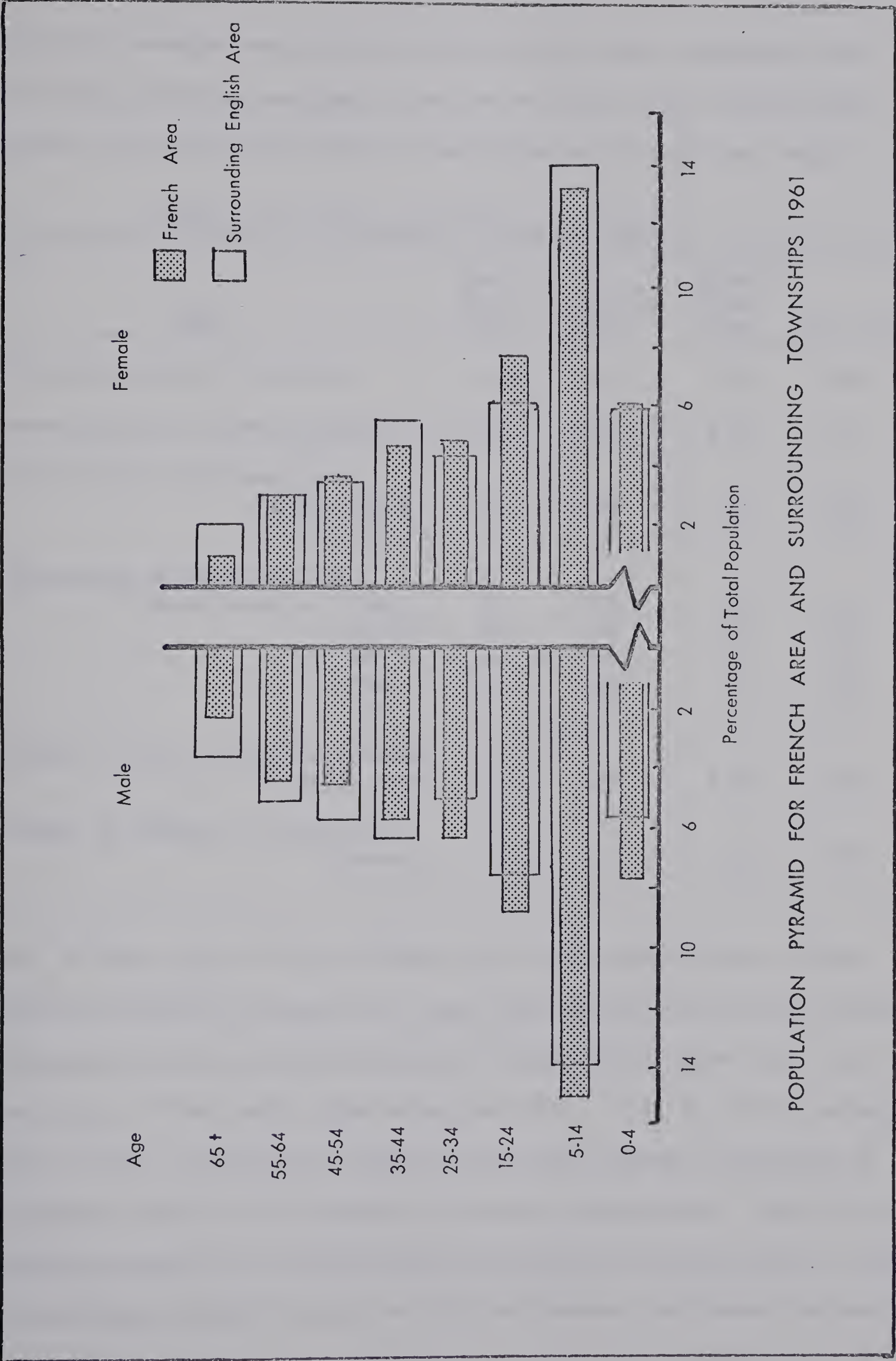


Figure 3.3

here is to examine some of these data in tabular form, comparing Smoky River with two other municipal districts of similar size and settlement pattern, and to the Peace River census division (C.D. 15) as a whole.

Table 3.2 - Agricultural Characteristics

1966	Smoky River M.D.	Fairview M.D.	Spirit River M.D.	C.D. 15
Average Population Per Farm	3.65	3.97	3.56	3.85
Average Size of Farm in Quarters	3.5	4.8	4.0	3.0
Percentage of Improved Land				
- under crops	82	75	71	74
- in pasture	1	3	2	3
Percentage of Improved Land				
under crops in Wheat	21	26	29	23
Barley	32	27	40	29
Hay	17	16	13	21
Rape	9	16	8	11
Flax	11	3	1	5
Number of Autos, Trucks & Tractors per Operator	2.83	3.51	3.36	2.98
Number of Combines & Balers per Operator	.76	.78	1.01	.80

Some of these figures look as though they differ significantly, though there is no way of testing this. Smoky River Municipal District is above the general average in the percentage of improved land under crops, and percentage of land under crops in hay and flax. It is low in the average size of farms, percentage of improved land under pasture, percentage of cropland in wheat, and the number of vehicles per operator. There is no evidence, however, to attribute these differences to ethnic origin. They are much more likely to be due to local preferences, settlement patterns

and physical characteristics.

The Core and the Periphery

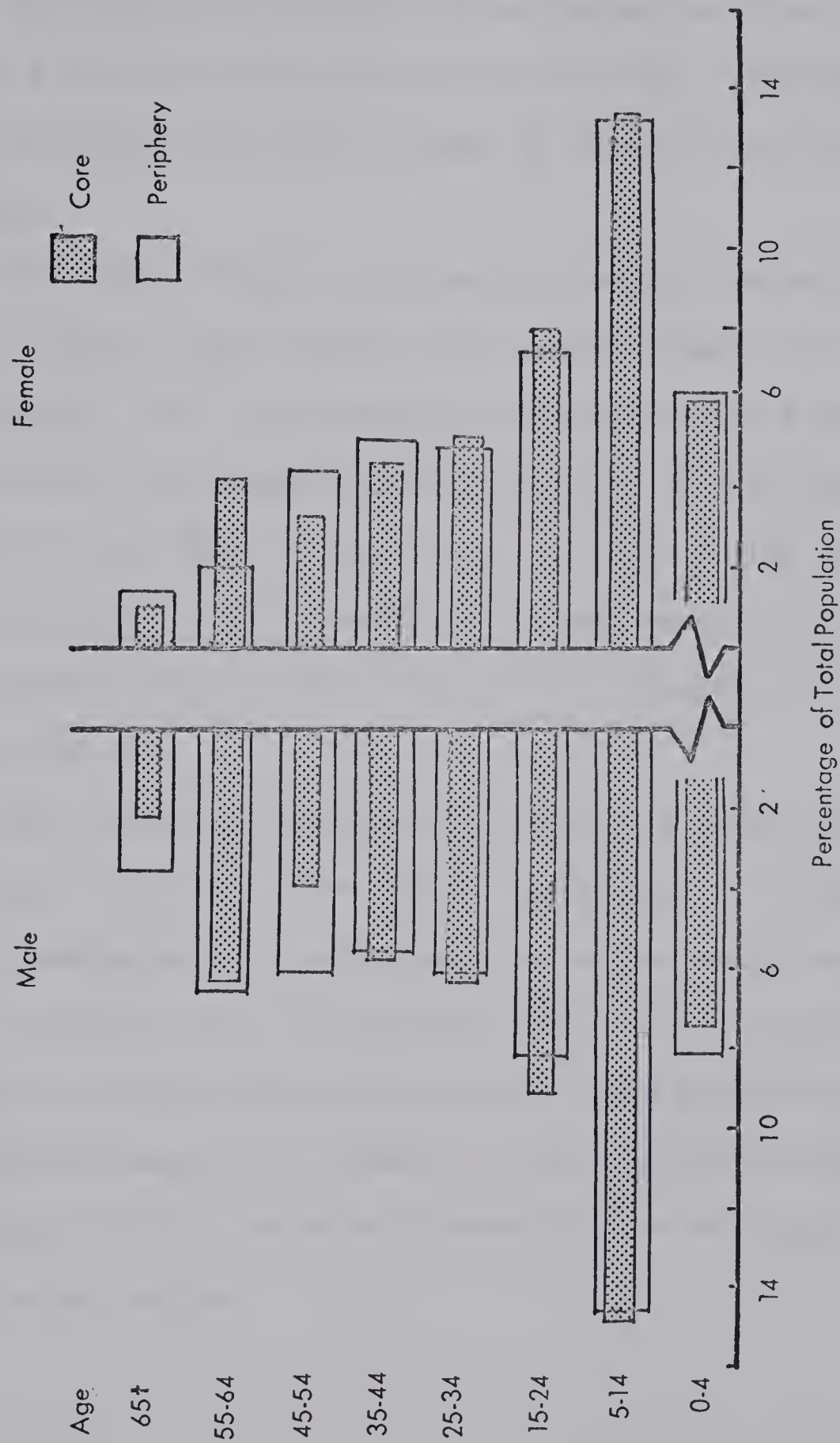
The French Area was subdivided into the Core and the Periphery on the basis of ethnic origin. An attempt will be made here to see the strength of this division using similar methods to those employed earlier, but also calling upon data collected by field work since both these areas were part of the study area.

Table 3.3 - 't' Test Results for Various Characteristics

	Mean Values		't' Value	Degrees of Freedom	Degree of Significance
	Core	Periphery			
Rural Population Density+	5.63	3.64	2.0	16	>5%
Family Size+	5.096	4.955	0.8	16	10%
Farm Size in Quarters*	4.4	5.0	1.0	63	10%
Percent of Population Completed Third Year High School+	4.63	6.57	2.2	16	1%
French Origin (percentage)+	89.4	59.1	3.0	16	1%
Amount of French Spoken* (out of 4)	3.0	2.0	3.3	63	<5%

(Data Source: + Census 1961 and 1966; * Fieldwork)

For all the data shown there are differences between the Core and the Periphery, but only those dealing with French origin, amount of French spoken, and education are significant. The first two strongly reinforce the sub-regional division made between the Core and the Periphery. A



POPULATION PYRAMID FOR FRENCH CORE AND PERIPHERY 1966

Figure 3.4

population pyramid comparing the Core and the Periphery is shown (Figure 3.4). The Core has only a slightly higher percentage in the younger groups, and generally lower proportions in the older age groups, but the means of each group do not differ enough to compare them statistically.

Summary

This chapter began by delineating a single feature region on the basis of ethnic origin figures and by sub-dividing it into the Core and the Periphery. The French Region is a densely settled area surrounded on several sides by more sparsely settled areas. On the northwest it is bounded by the Peace River. Only in the vicinities of Eaglesham and Nampa can the change in the proportion of French people with increasing distance from the Core be termed transitional. Elsewhere the break is relatively clear cut.

There seemed to be sufficient evidence to support the regional and sub-regional divisions. The differences between the French Region and the surrounding area do not permeate the entire social and economic structure of the area, but are certainly great enough to permit the application of the label "multiple-feature" to the French Region. The various features examined are, however, at the most only loosely connected, and there is little evidence of these differences being directly related to ethnic origin.

CHAPTER IV

THE FOCUS OF THE FRENCH REGION - THE ECONOMIC SPHERE

The previous chapter has shown that while the French Area is similar in many respects to the surrounding area and to the Peace as a whole there is enough evidence to regard it as a distinct sub-region within the Peace. This chapter will examine the spatial factors which are tying it together.

General Background

Centrality is basic to the idea of areal functional organization. At the lowest level of the areal functional hierarchy farm fields focus on the farmstead. Farmsteads in turn focus on villages, towns and regional centers, and these in turn on major cities. In this study it is the intermediate stages which are of primary importance.

Retail and service establishments¹ tend to cluster in market centers visited by surrounding consumers. The distance consumers will travel depends in general on the nature of the good or service they are interested in as well as on their location with respect to centers of various sizes. Rural people, however, are normally dependent on one town more than any other for a majority of their goods and services. Studies of the reciprocal relationship between town and country, of the constant comings and goings of rural residents, have been carried out

¹ "An establishment is essentially the physical manifestation of an activity and is generally the unit in which an activity is performed... In contrast the term FUNCTION refers to the activities which are performed in the establishments. According to these definitions it is possible for more than one function to be associated with a particular establishment. Each occurrence of a function constitutes one functional unit." (Stafford, p. 166)

for numerous decades. The major objective of these studies has been to determine the area of the countryside interdependent with a given town. This involves selection of key criteria about which inquiries are carried out. In recent years the subject matter has become more complex dealing with the relationships between the population of towns, the numbers of functions performed by the town, and the population and size of the area served, as well as focusing on the consumer rather than the town and studying his retail purchasing behavior. The study of the location, size, nature, and frequency of urban places has given rise to central place theory.

The areas dependent on towns for goods and services have been called by many names - trade areas, service areas, hinterlands, urban fields, zones or spheres of influence, catchment areas - all meaning more or less the same. Since some urban places are larger than others in terms of both population and commercial activity the relationship between towns of various sizes and their zones of influence becomes hierarchical in nature. This is summed up by Berry:

Consumers who must visit the market place on a regular basis want a location which permits them to conduct their business with a minimum of effort and if a choice of location is available will always prefer the one with the least effort. Yet their business trips are varied. They are willing to travel only short distances to obtain the items they need frequently. Less frequent purchases can often be postponed....For different activities centrality therefore has meaning at different scales; in any area a variety of central places will thus exist. Businessmen located in some will attract consumers on a frequent basis, but only over short distances. Other places will be able to provide a greater variety of goods to much wider areas. The clusters of activity in these places vary, along with the sizes of urban places in which the markets locate (Berry, 1967, p. 3).

Towns provide social and institutional services as well as purely retail or economic ones. The fact that social factors have often

been overlooked is explained by Platt:

Less attention has been given to social aspects of occupance than to others and this is understandable; social geography is not a highly developed branch of field research; social order is less obviously connected with the natural and cultural landscape than are economic and political features; social phenomena are less subject to field observation and so require more intimate inquiry (Platt, 1961, p. 54).

The town based region has become one of the major elements in the spatial structure of our society.

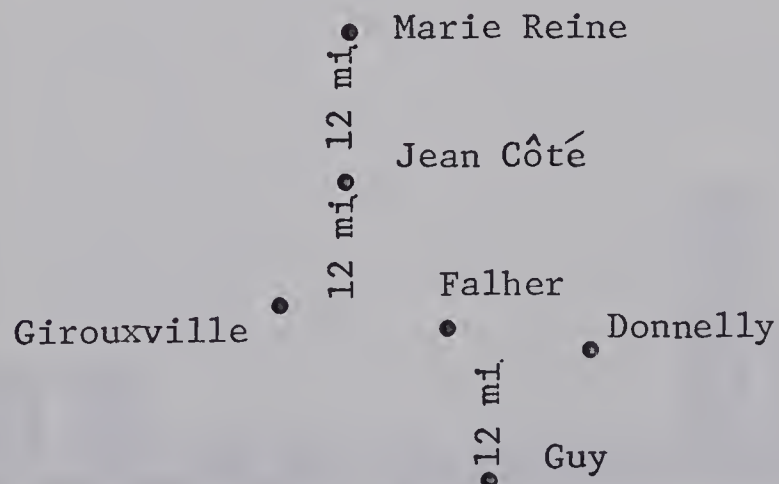
These trade centers (small) are important focal points for social and economic activity in the region. Besides being places of residence for many they are places for marketing farm produce and distributing farm supplies and they are places for social interaction and cultural fulfillment for the people of town and country (Hodge, 1965, p. 87).

Study Area Background

The pattern of towns and villages within the study area is far from being uniform, the area being unevenly settled, and the railroad being responsible for a linear pattern. As in most New World grain growing regions trade centers grew at grain collection points which were usually placed every six to ten miles along the track, this being the feasible distance which the grain could be hauled using a horse. The bulk of the agricultural settlement followed the railroad and existing towns which were bypassed declined rapidly; for example Grouard. As more families acquired a motor vehicle some elevator towns grew while others did not.

The town of Falher is centrally located within the study area and the French Region as earlier defined, and in terms of retail and service trade is by far the most important in the study area. It is not the study area's largest town but its population has been growing rapidly. McLennan is larger than Falher but less important. It has

fewer functions, fewer establishments, and only 41 per cent of Falher's local trade volume (Alberta Industrial Development Branch, 1966). It has only one grain elevator compared to Falher's seven and its population has grown little since the War. McLennan's function as a railroad junction seems to be responsible for its relatively high population. On the other side of Falher are two smaller towns, Girouxville and Donnelly. These four above mentioned towns are the apparent focus of French community activities. All but McLennan have an overwhelmingly French-speaking population and most of the retail establishments in all four towns are run by people of French origin. There are a number of other centers, varying in size from 50 to 250 people, in the study area. Nampa, Watino, Eaglesham and Tangent are on the railroad; only the latter can be considered a "French" town. The location of the other three hamlets with respect to Falher and Girouxville is interesting. Marie Reine, Jean Côté and Guy all have a population of about fifty, virtually all French Canadian, and none is on the railroad. It appears that they "grew" around the church and in the days before the car, six miles was about the limit people could travel to church. Today each center has one retail



establishment - a general store - and most of the inhabitants are farmers. Each has a church and two have schools.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TOWNS AND VILLAGES OF THE FRENCH AREA
1966

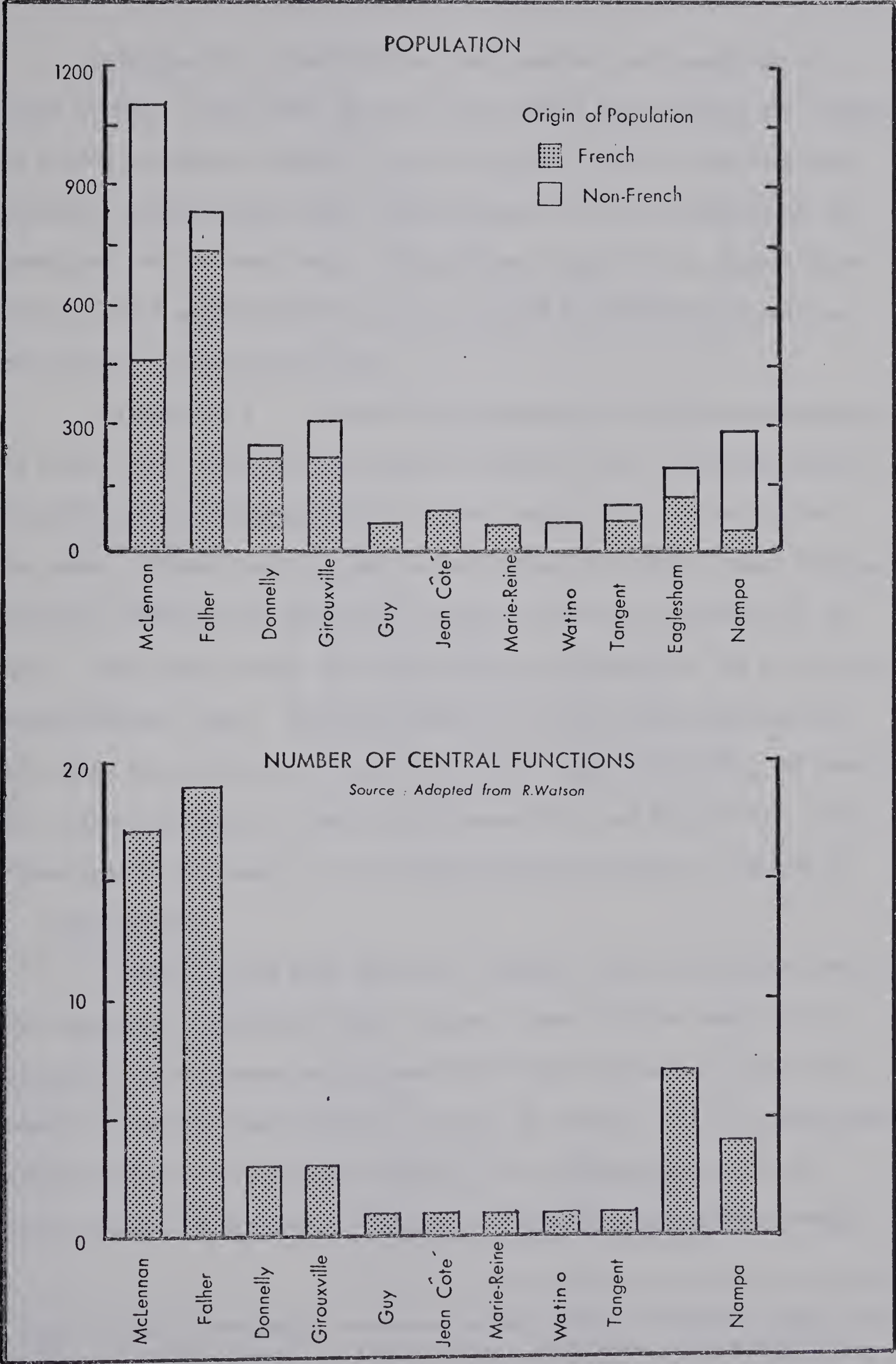


Figure 4.1

The central places of the study area are not operating in a closed system. Four towns, all over forty miles from Falher, all larger, all having a greater volume of local trade, all except one having more functions, compete with Falher (and McLennan) for the patronage of the inhabitants of the study area. Peace River, High Prairie, Spirit River (with Rycroft) and Valleyview are all located in different directions with respect to the French Core.

Figures 4.3 - 4.4 show the importance of Falher and McLennan, the major towns of the French Region, relative to the competing centers using population, number of functions and volume of trade as indices. The number of functions is based on the system for Alberta towns designed by Watson (1969) using forty-eight retail and service functions as indices. This latter study also suggested ten key services² to be used in ranking Alberta towns. Applying these to the study area the order of importance is as follows: Peace River (10), High Prairie (8), Valleyview (6), Falher (5), Spirit River (5), McLennan (4), and Rycroft (2). This corresponds very closely to the ranking shown in Figures 4.3 and 4.4.

The Problem

Falher is the most important "French" town in the Peace and the most important town in the French Region. Nearly 90 per cent of its population are of French origin and their first language is used constantly in business and commerce, as well as socially. It is central and easily accessible to the French Region. The problem here is to see whether Falher is the focus of activity within that region even though

² They are daily newspaper, secondary school, public library, bank, law office, hospital, dentist, liquor store, accountant, movie theatre.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MAJOR TOWNS AFFECTING THE FRENCH AREA 1966

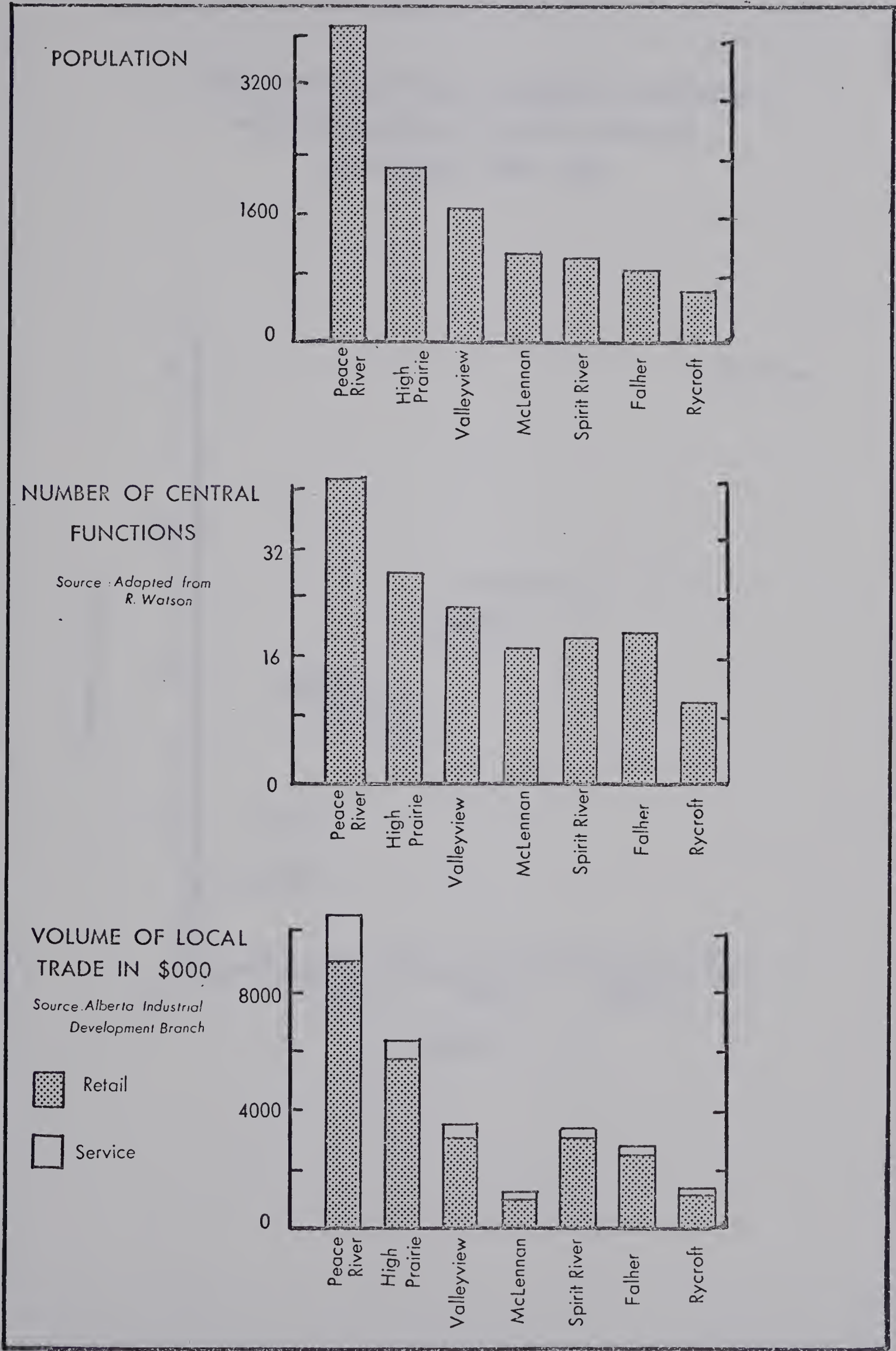


Figure 4.2

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NUMBER OF FUNCTIONS,
AND POPULATION OF TOWNS AFFECTING
THE FRENCH AREA 1966

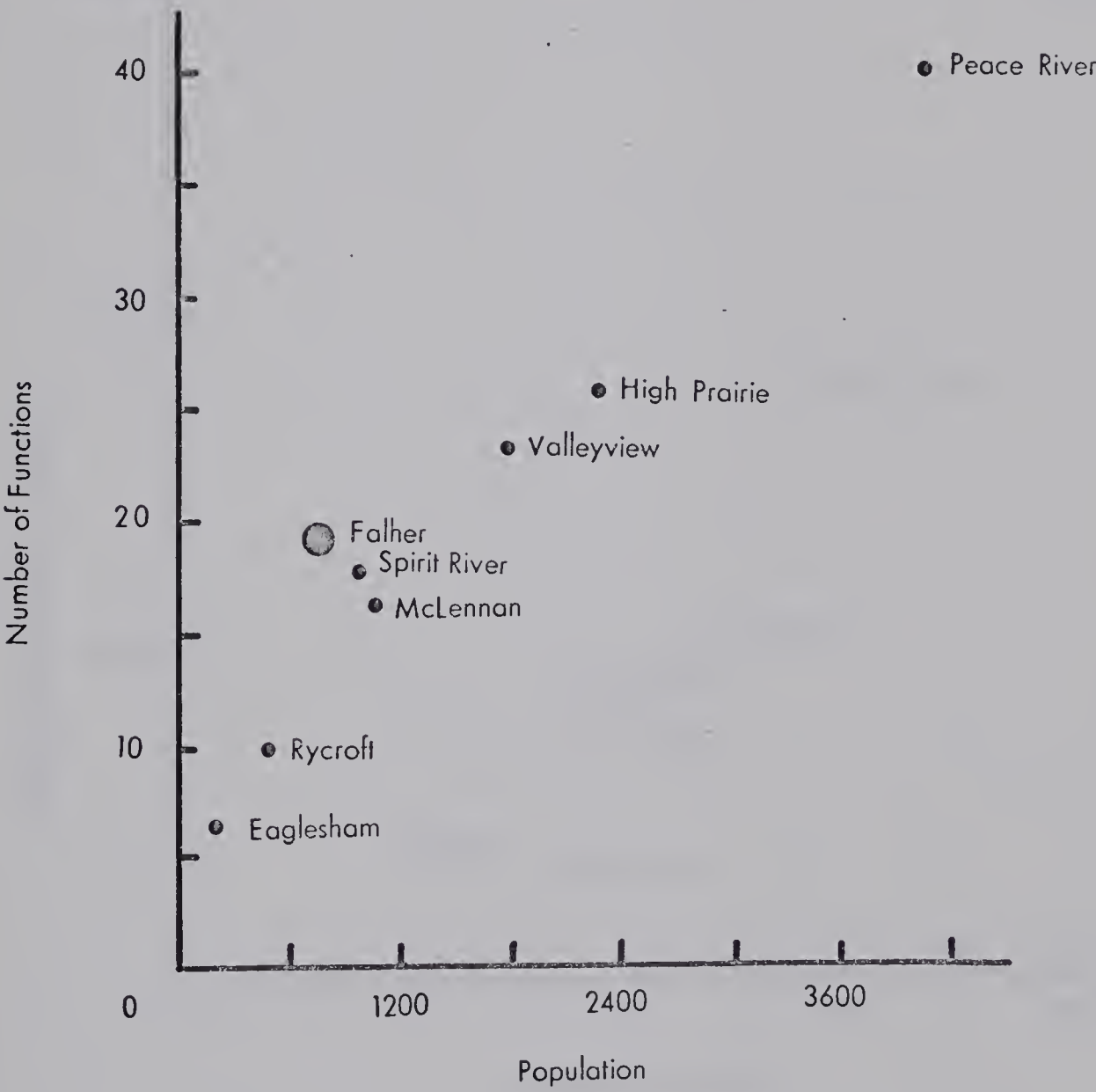


Figure 4.3

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NUMBER OF FUNCTIONS AND VOLUME
OF LOCAL TRADE OF TOWNS AFFECTING FRENCH AREA

1966

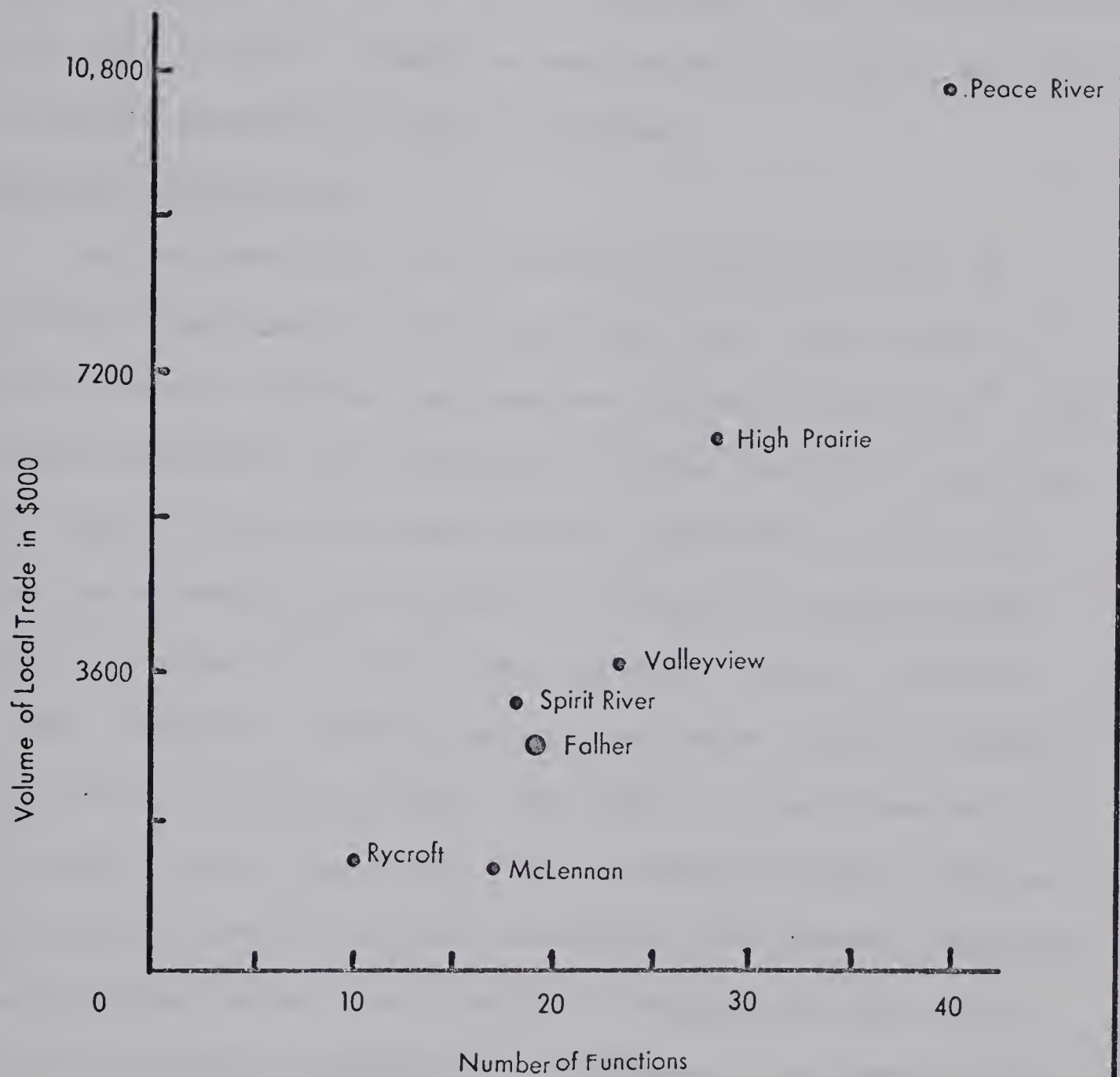


Figure 4.4

some people may be closer to other centers which have more to offer in terms of variety of goods and services available. Four major variables - (1) ethnicity, (2) distance from Falher, (3) size of central place used, and (4) the individual goods and services - are involved in examining the nature of Falher's sphere of influence. This is best done in two sections depending on the criteria, economic or non-economic in nature. The latter will be examined separately in the next chapter.

French Core Trade Areas

The first step here is to determine the area dependent on Falher and the other centers of the French Core for a large portion of its retail goods and financial, personal and professional services³. The questionnaire asked where the respondents obtained certain key goods and services, some of a low order (grain elevator, groceries, gas and oil, fertilizer and/or seed) which even some of the smaller centers provide, and others of a higher order (drug store articles, clothes, machinery, doctor, bank, insurance) available only in the larger centers including Falher and the four competing towns. The choice of these items was considered suitable for the study area. Bus timetables which are very useful in Britain are just the opposite in western North America, especially when a metropolitan center is not involved. Dentists are very useful, but one is not located in either Falher or McLennan. The questionnaire was not interested in the frequency of trips made, nor in the second preferred center. If the respondent answered "sometimes here, sometimes there" then the last visit was the one recorded.

³ Criteria such as schools, newspapers, radio, etc. were considered non-economic in nature and will be examined in the next chapter.

In mapping the area dependent on the French Core towns two sets of criteria may be used. Figure 4.5 uses all ten criteria. The problem with this however is that Eaglesham, not considered as a "French" town, provides from one to six of these services to respondents living west of the Smoky. This difficulty becomes of great importance later when a gravity model will be applied to estimate the combined effect of center size and distance. The second set of criteria contains the five major functions found mainly in the larger towns. With the exception of the few people who use the limited facilities of the Treasury Branch in Eaglesham all respondents must travel to Falher, McLennan or one of the other major towns for banking. The results obtained using the second set of criteria are shown in Figure 4.6. They are very similar to the results obtained by the first approach. The extent of the Falher (French Core) trading area is generally similar to that shown in a previous Provincial Government study (Provincial Planning Office, n.d.). It was, however, necessary to verify the earlier results since only limited criteria (farm machinery, farm implements, agricultural products) were used and the trade areas were defined by the towns themselves. In addition it was necessary to obtain data about individual respondents in order to determine the importance of Falher as a regional center for both the French and non-French groups.

The boundaries of the area dependent for a large part of its major goods and services on the major French towns closely correspond with the limits of the French Region on the southern and eastern margins, but tend to be more extensive on the west and the north (see Figure 4.7). The peripheral French areas north of the Municipal District line

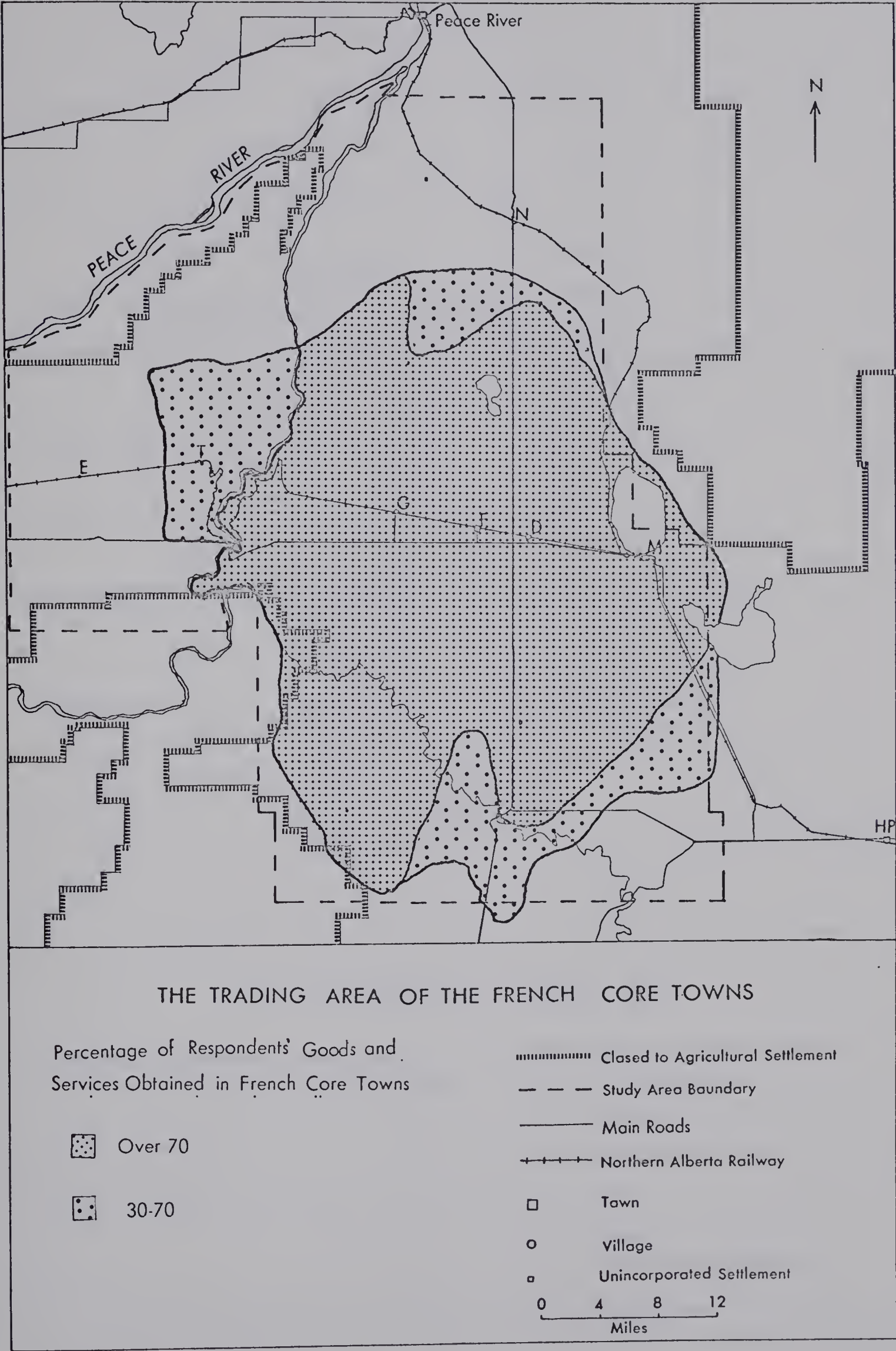


Figure 4.5

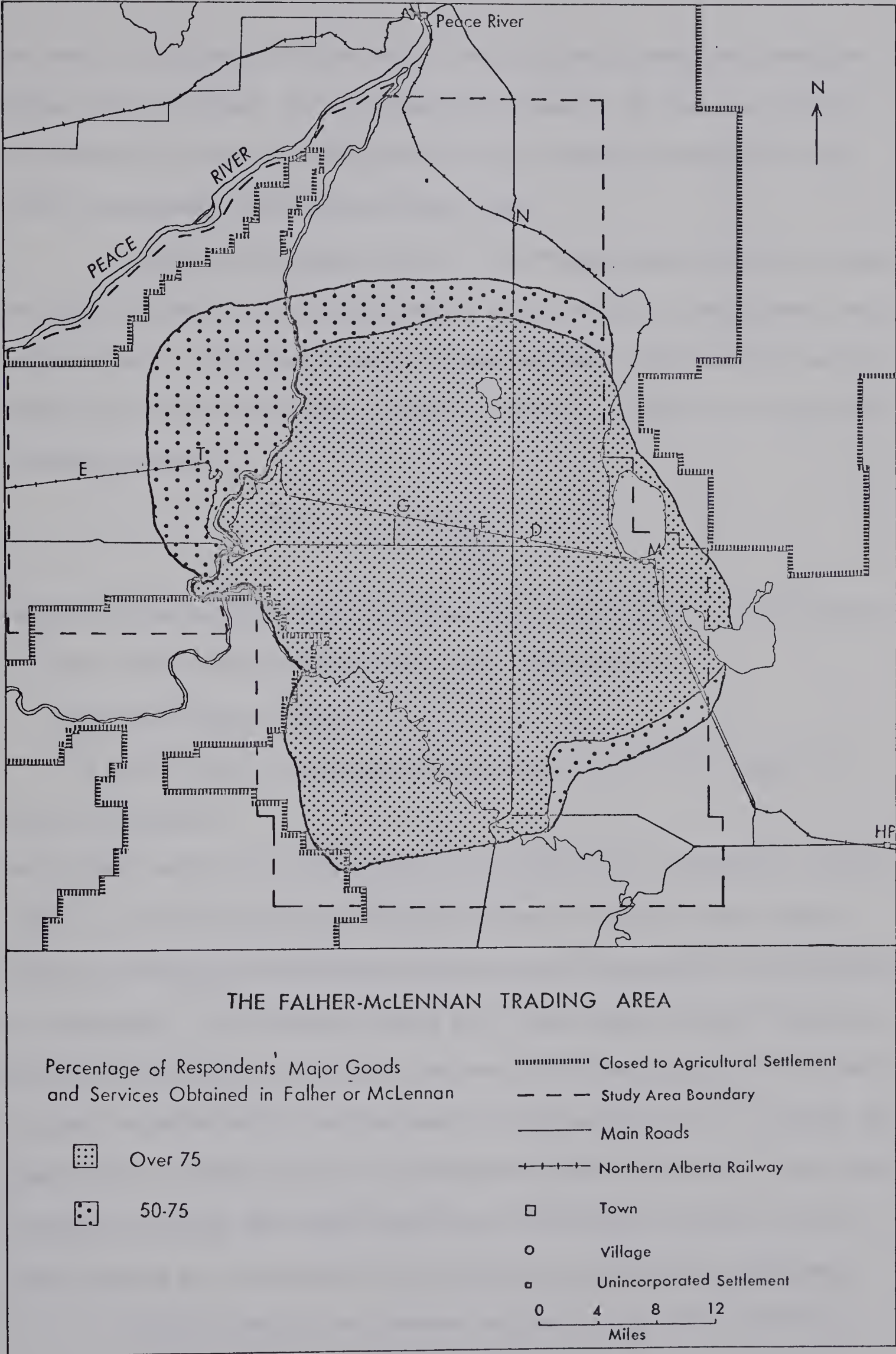


Figure 4.6

and west of the Smoky obtain few, if any, of their goods and services, either major or minor, in the French Core towns. By contrast, all of the French Core with the exception of one township northwest of Jean Côté is dependent on the major French towns.

The fact that these areas of the French Periphery do not focus on Falher is made more striking when a simple Reilly gravitational model is introduced. The theoretical or expected trade area boundary between Falher and each of the major competing centers is arrived at using the following formula:-

$$D_b = \frac{D_{ab}}{1 + \sqrt{\frac{P_a}{P_b}}}$$

where D_b = the breaking point between town A and town B in miles from B;

D_{ab} = the distance separating town A from town B

P_a = the size of town A

P_b = the size of town B; size being measured in the number of central functions.

Huff (1964) points out weaknesses in this model, but according to Berry (1967, p. 41) this approach "remains relevant in rural areas, where choice is severely constrained by distance and the number of alternatives is restricted". The distances used were those along the main highways between the two towns concerned, and once the breaking point was found a line was extended away from the road at right angles to it to either the limits of the study area or to a prominent physical barrier. The justification for doing this lies in the local settlement pattern; the distance between any two points by any number of routes being the same.

On the southern and eastern margins of the study area the

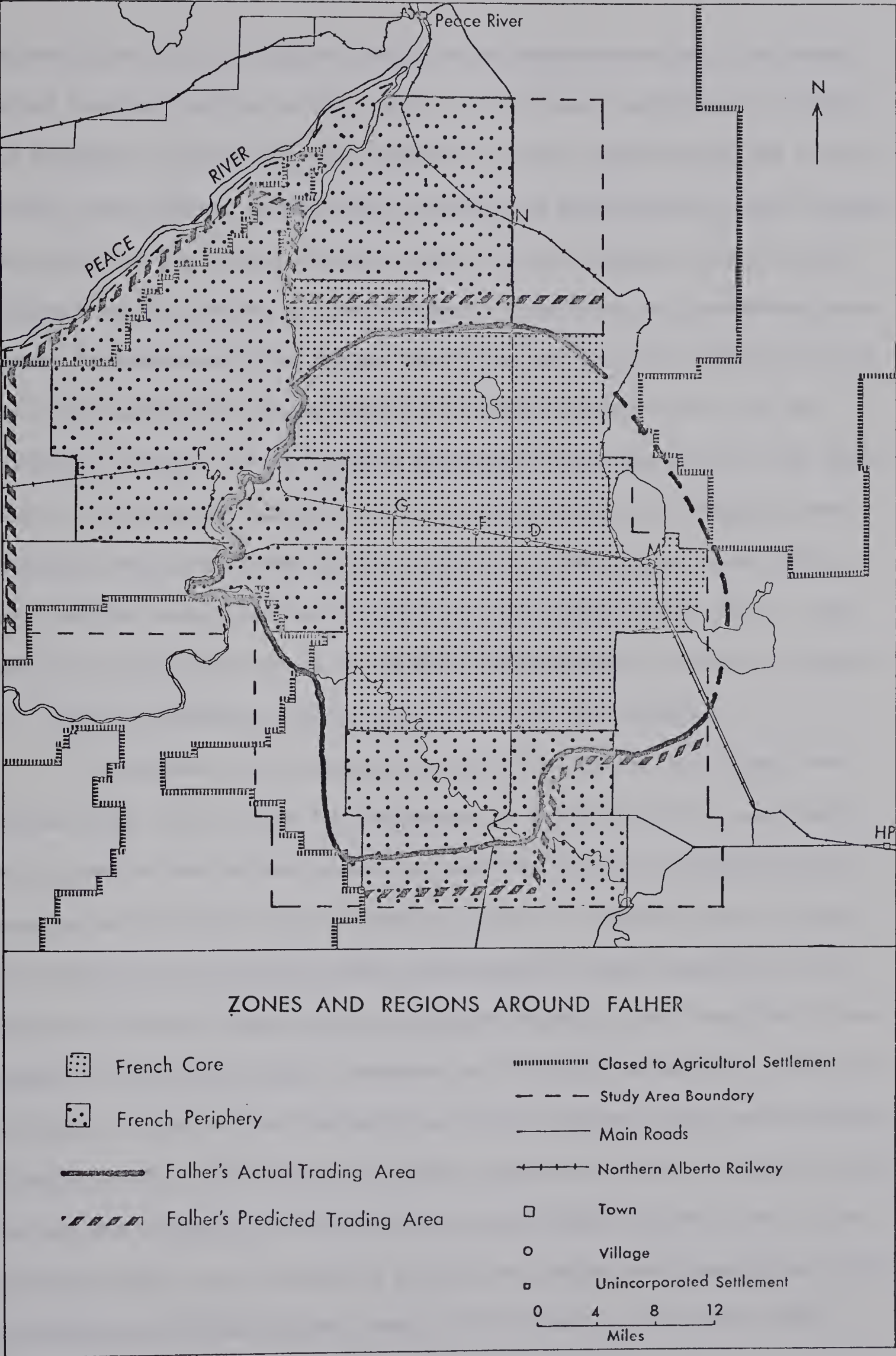


Figure 4.7

expected limit of the Falher trading area approximates both the French Region boundary and the actual limit of the retail importance of Falher and McLennan. On the northern boundary it also approximates the actual trading area limits, though here a portion of the Periphery lies outside the predicted and actual trading areas. On the western side the model predicts that a portion of the Periphery as well as the non-French area around Eaglesham would be within the Falher trading zone, while in fact this zone ends at the Smoky River, some eighteen miles short of the predicted location. This finding emphasizes the importance of the Smoky River as the western boundary of the trading area of the French towns, although there are French speaking people in the Tangent area farther west and the river has been bridged for more than fifteen years. The possible explanation for this and other discrepancies evident in Figure 4.7 will be examined in more detail later in this chapter.

However, it is necessary first to study the individual responses, both with respect to dependence on the French Core towns as a whole, and to the various goods and services involved, emphasizing the patterns of the French and non-French groups. A similar type of study was carried out by Murdie (1965) who looked at travel patterns of Old Order and "Modern" Mennonites in Southern Ontario. He found that "consumers of differing social, economic and cultural backgrounds selected different levels of the hierarchy to obtain required goods and services" (Murdie, 1965, p.212). One of Murdie's groups was extreme in that it did not use the automobile and did not buy ready made clothes at all. His plea that this type of study be carried out using more homogenous groups is partly met in the present study of the French in the Peace River

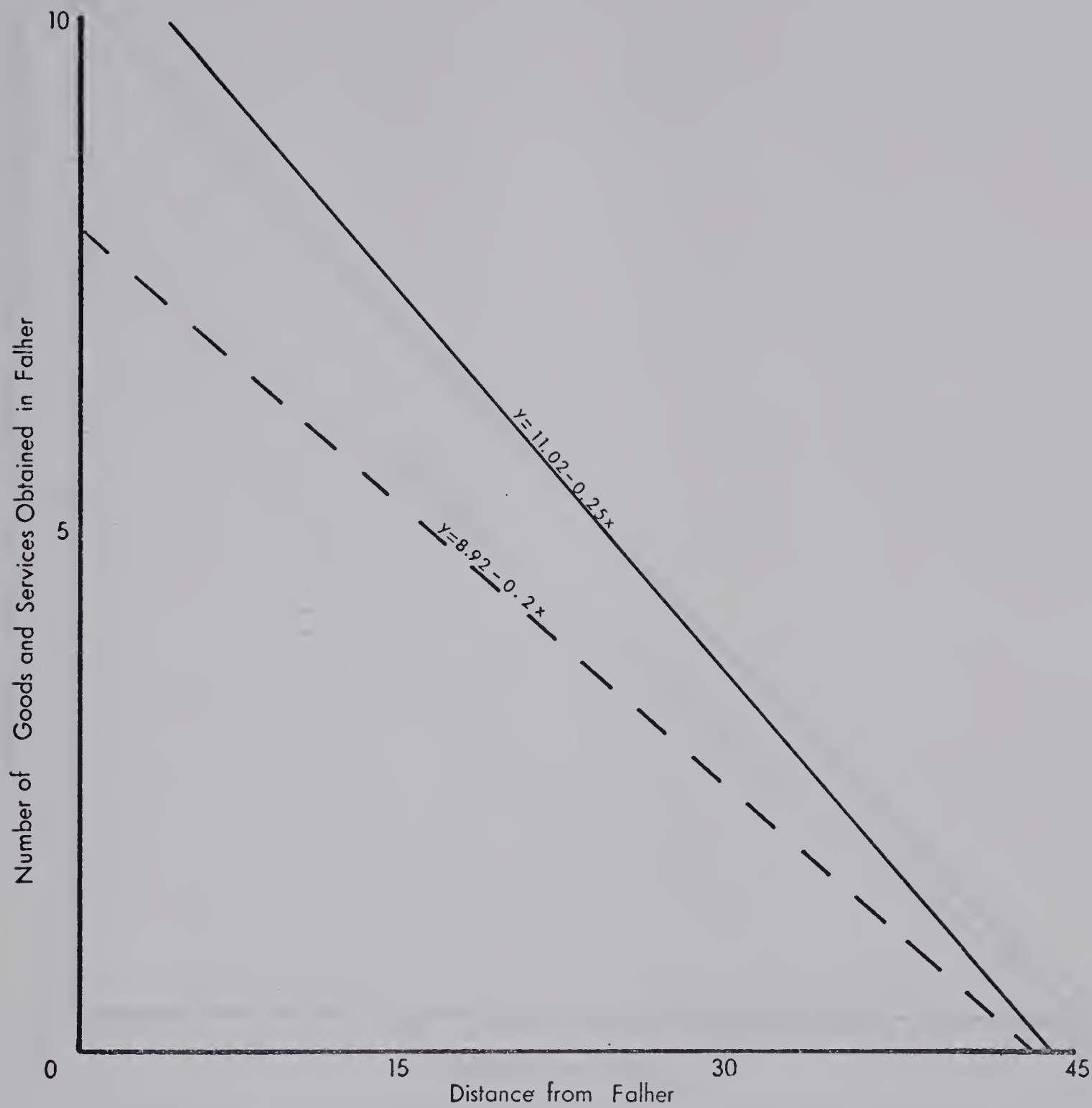
Country, although the primary aim here is rather different from Murdie's study in Southern Ontario.

Use of the French Core Towns

The next step is to see whether the French as a group are more dependent on Falher and the surrounding towns than the non-French. The grouping of the sample had to be altered slightly to keep the language factor in the forefront. Three families with the head of the household officially classed as being of French origin claimed French was used in the home less than 50 per cent of the time (Figure 1.7). They were placed in the non-French group. This makes the sample 60 per cent French.

Figure 4.8 plots the number of goods and services obtained in the French Core towns against distance from Falher for both the French and non-French groups. As is expected the respondents use the French Core towns less as the distance from them increases, but the members of the French group, especially those living close to Falher, show an overall tendency to use them more than the non-French group. This graph is not the most "reliable" because of the problems with Eaglesham and Tangent (see p. 55). The five major functions are graphed in Figure 3. 12 with results very similar to those obtained using ten functions. In both cases the correlation between distance from the French Core and the number of services obtained there is much stronger for the French group.

Another method of plotting the dependence on Falher is shown in Figures 4.9 and 10. Absolute distance is replaced by relative location between Falher and the competing center. Falher is given the value "0" and the competing center "100". Each respondent's location is then expressed as some value between 0 and 100. If a respondent lives half way

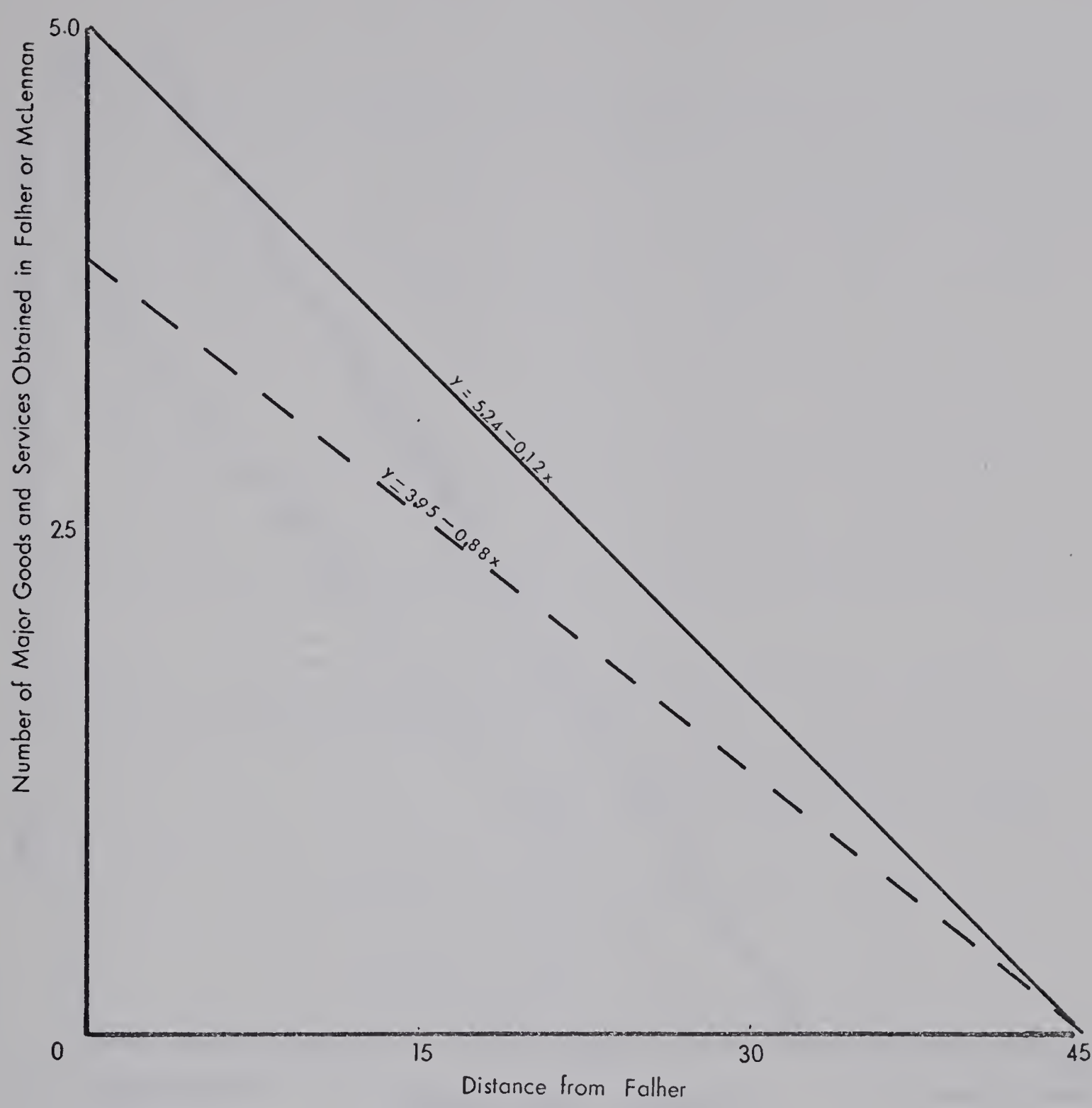


RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISTANCE FROM AND DEPENDENCE ON THE FRENCH CORE TOWNS

— French Respondents $R = -.789$

- - - Non-French Respondents $R = -.520$

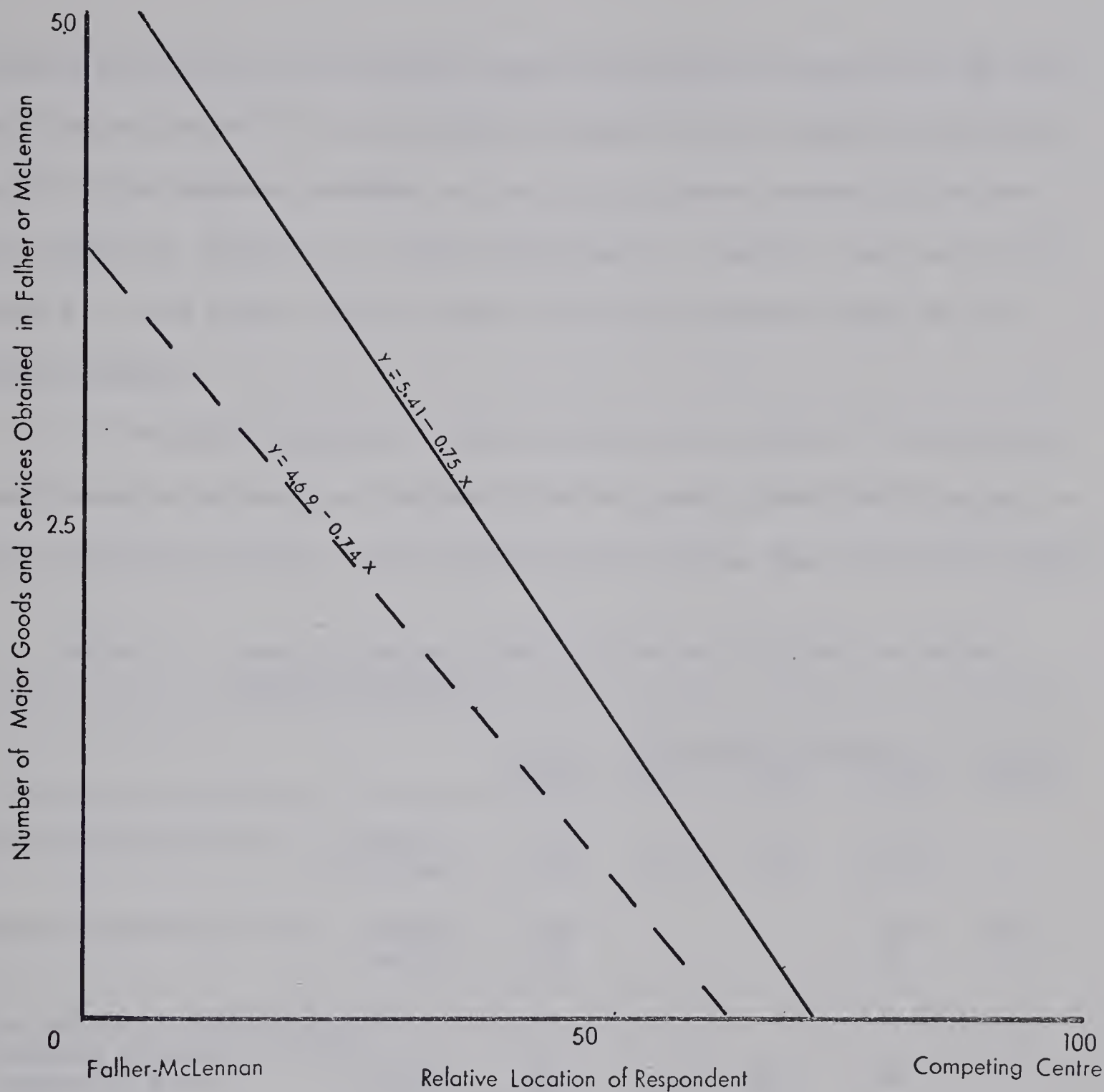
Figure 4.8



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISTANCE FROM AND DEPENDENCE ON FATHER-McLENNAN

— French Respondents R= -.726
- - - Non-French Respondents R= -.456

Figure 4.9



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISTANCE FROM AND DEPENDENCE ON
FALHER-McLENNAN.

— French Respondents $R = -.649$

- - - Non - French Respondents $R = -.580$

Figure 4.10

between Falher and the competing center his relative location is 50; if he lives one-third of the way between Falher and the competing center it is 33. This approach reduces the varying distances between Falher and the competing centers to a common denominator. However, the results obtained in this manner differ little from those obtained using the two other methods.

One final approach to this problem is to examine the questionnaire results in terms of deviance from the gravity model with respect to the five major services. The following table shows that the French people

Table 4.1 - Average Number of Major Services Obtained in Falher and/or McLennan

	Relative Distance				
	Total	0-20	21-40	41-60	61-80
Inside Predicted Area - French	3.5	4.6	3.4	2.3	
- English	2.0	3.7	2.2	1.3	
Outside Predicted Area - French	0.6			1.0	0.2
- English	0.0			0	0
Percentage of Time Respondents Deviate from Model Inside Predicted Area					
- French	30	8	32	44	
- English	60	26	56	74	
Outside Predicted Area- French	12			20	4
- English	0			0	0

living within the predicted French Core trading zone go against the behavioral pattern predicted by the model less than the non-French group does; that as the distance from Falher increases the dependence on it decreases for both groups; and that as distance from Falher increases the difference between the French and non-French groups decreases. It also shows that the French people living outside the predicted zone move

inwards towards the French Core for some services while the English people in the same areas behave completely as predicted and have no connections with the French Core at all.

It is beneficial here to summarize briefly what has been shown so far. French people live mainly within a twenty-five mile radius of Falher, the major town of the study area. Falher competes with four other centers for the patronage of the surrounding rural area. A Reilly gravitational model predicts that most of the French Region will fall within the economic sphere of influence of Falher. Field work, however, shows that the actual trading area falls short of its predicted limits, and people living even very close to Falher do not depend completely on it. When the total sample is split into French and non-French groups the dependence on Falher declines with distance for both groups though the French group always has the greater dependence on the town.

An attempt will now be made to discover, for both the French and non-French groups, if the centripetal pull of Falher varies with the nature of the good or service, the specific competing center, or the time of settlement of the respondent.

The Key Services

Questionnaire responses will first be examined with respect to the various goods and services inquired about.

GRAIN MARKET. Grain elevators are found at every settlement on the railroad in the study area. There is virtually no evidence of different patterns of behavior between the French and non-French groups. Within

the study area Falher has the greatest range drawing farmers from the entire southwest portion (Figures 4.11 and 4.12). A Falher official (personal communication, 1969) maintained that farmers from as far south as Valleyview bring their grain to its elevators. This may, in part, be true but several interviews south of the municipal district line indicate a preference for High Prairie. It appears that when distances of over ten miles and a choice of centers are present the farmer chooses the largest town, e.g. High Prairie over Falher, Falher over Donnelly (Figure 4.13). The one exception is the area on the east bank of the Smoky. The residents there prefer Girouxville, twelve miles away, rather than Watino, across the river but only one-quarter of the distance. Two explanations can be offered. There is a choice of elevators at Girouxville while only one company operates at Watino. Furthermore, preferences could have been established before the river was bridged and inertia has prevented the farmers from altering their pattern.

GAS AND OIL. These low order commodities are available at the four French Core towns, as well as Eaglesham, Nampa and the major towns outside of the study area. On the whole the respondents, whether French or not, obtain them at the closest center (Figures 4.14 and 4.15). Where people do travel farther than necessary or where they travel relatively long distances and have a choice of centers, they always choose the more important center. The breaking points between Nampa and the French Core, and Eaglesham and the French Core, show up clearly on the maps and correspond exactly to what is predicted by the Reilly formula, that is the Municipal District line and the Smoky River.

FERTILIZER AND SEED GRAIN. The response to this section is of little use.

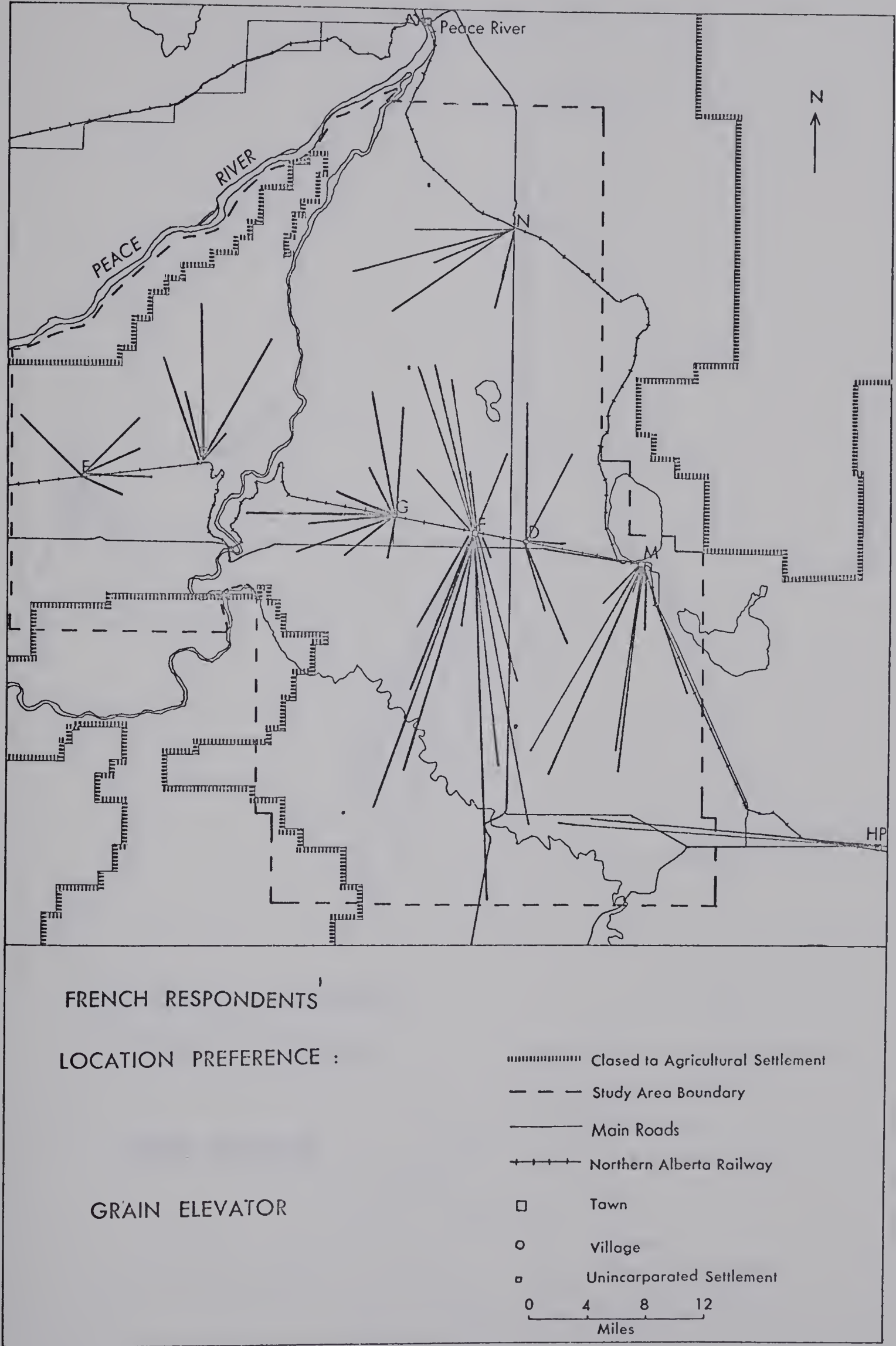


Figure 4.11

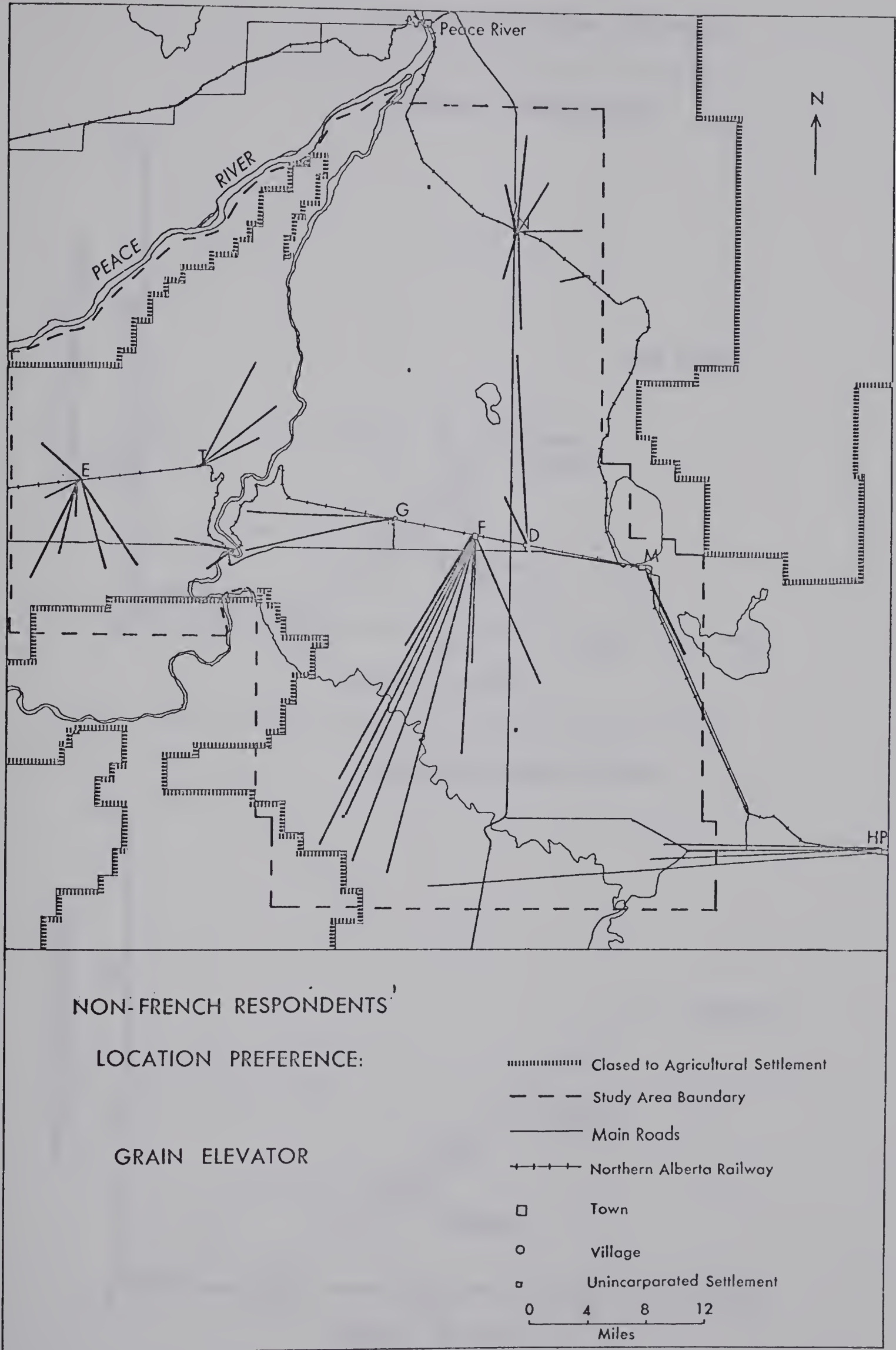


Figure 4.12

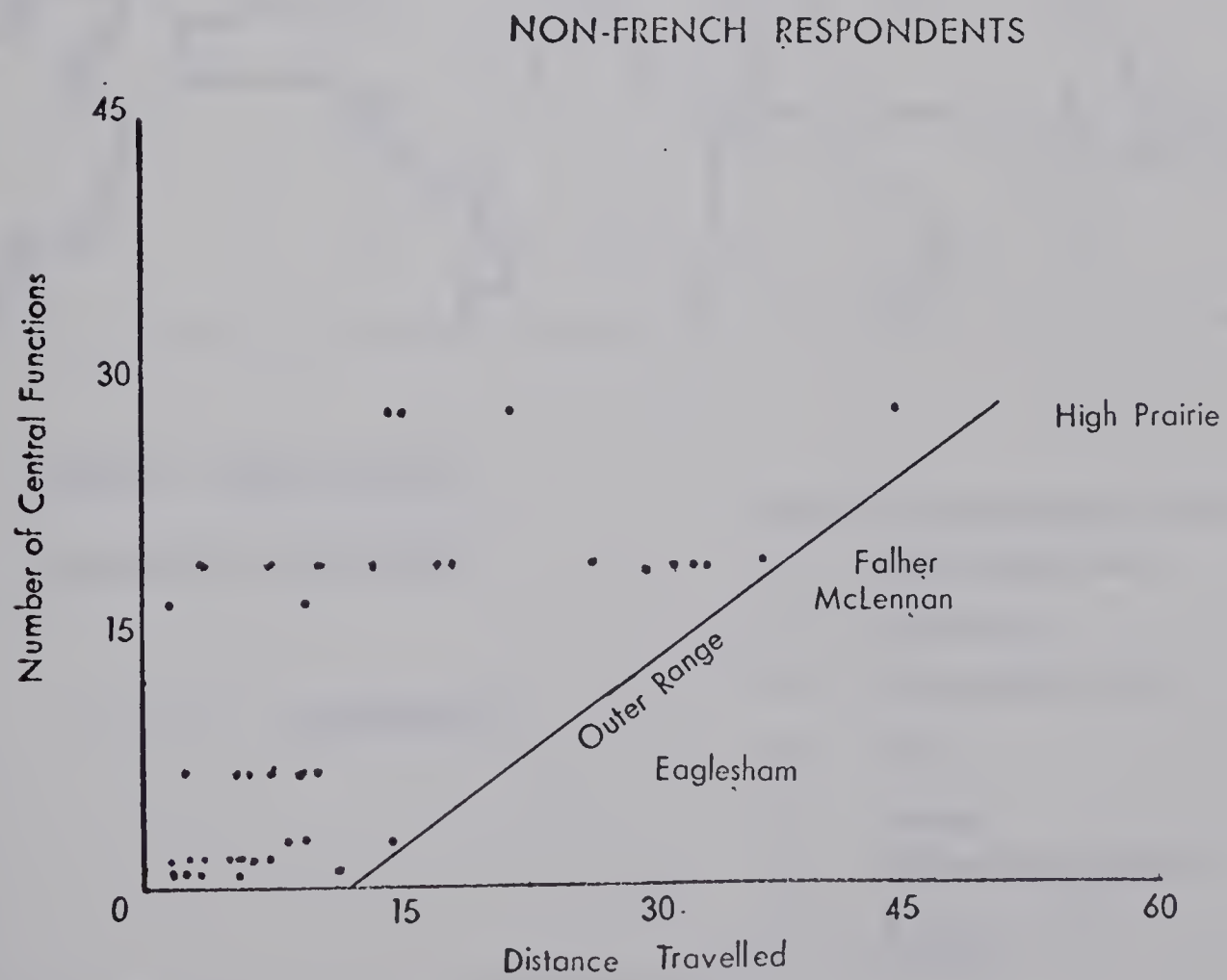
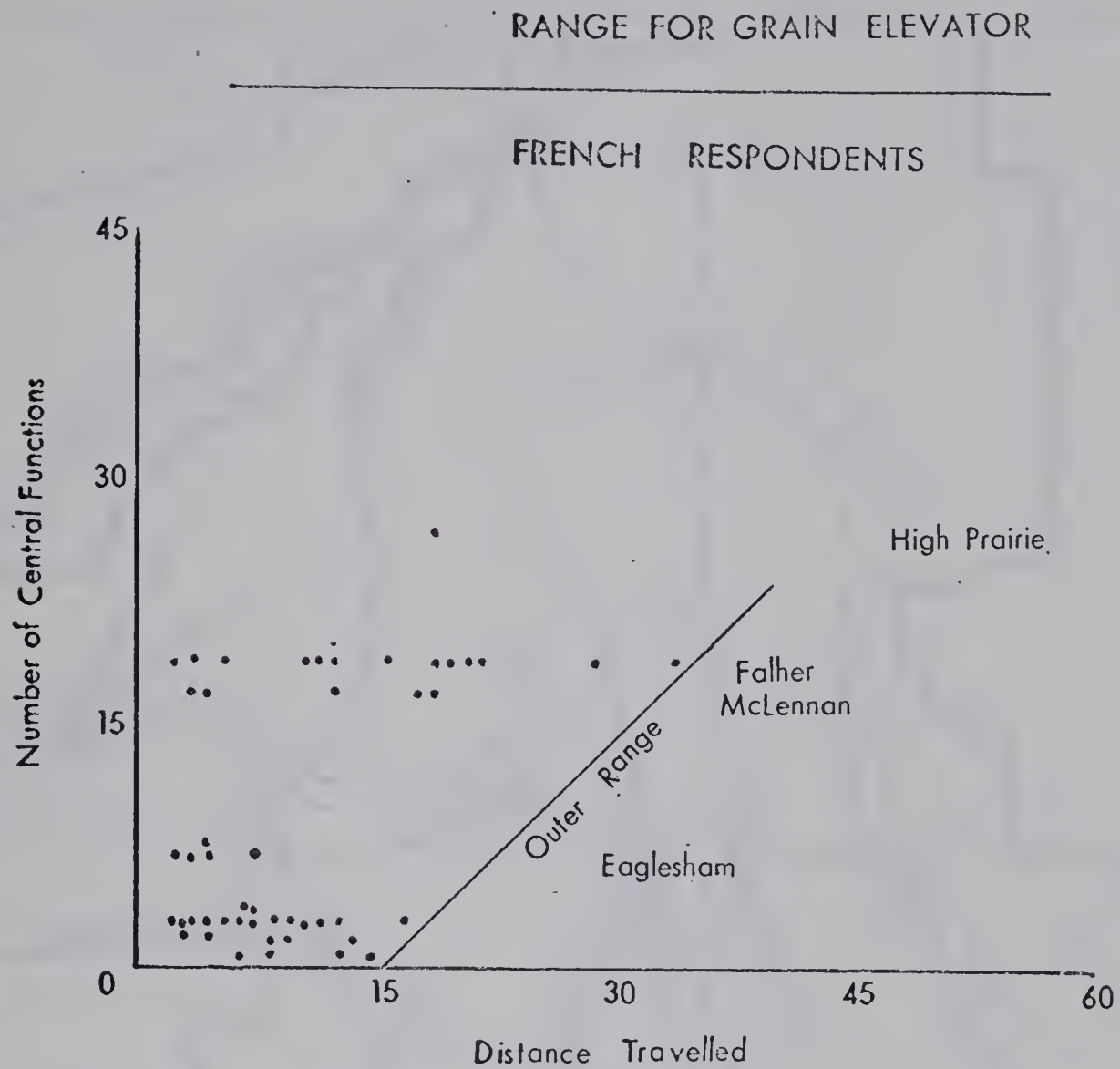


Figure 4.13

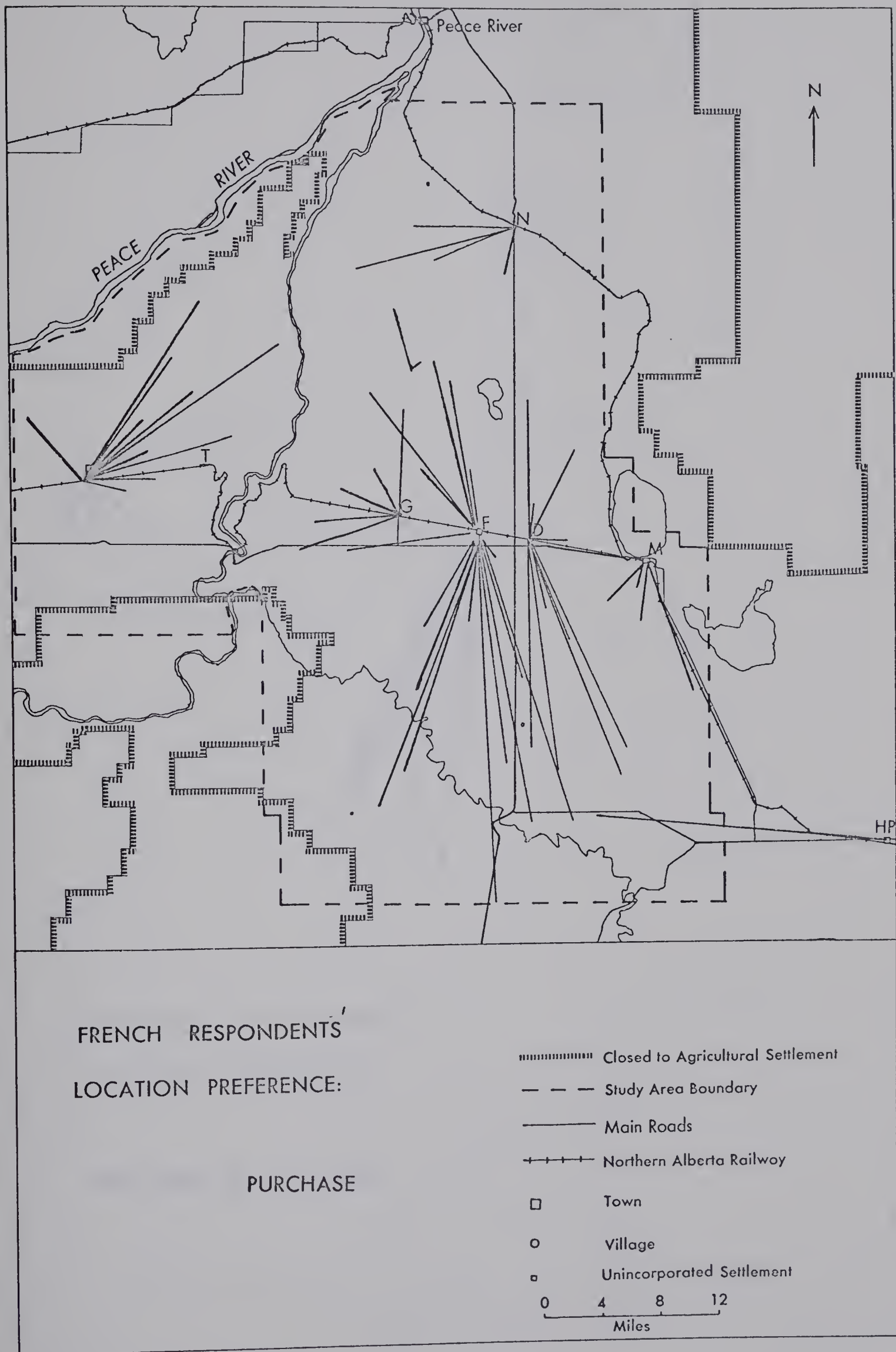


Figure 4.14

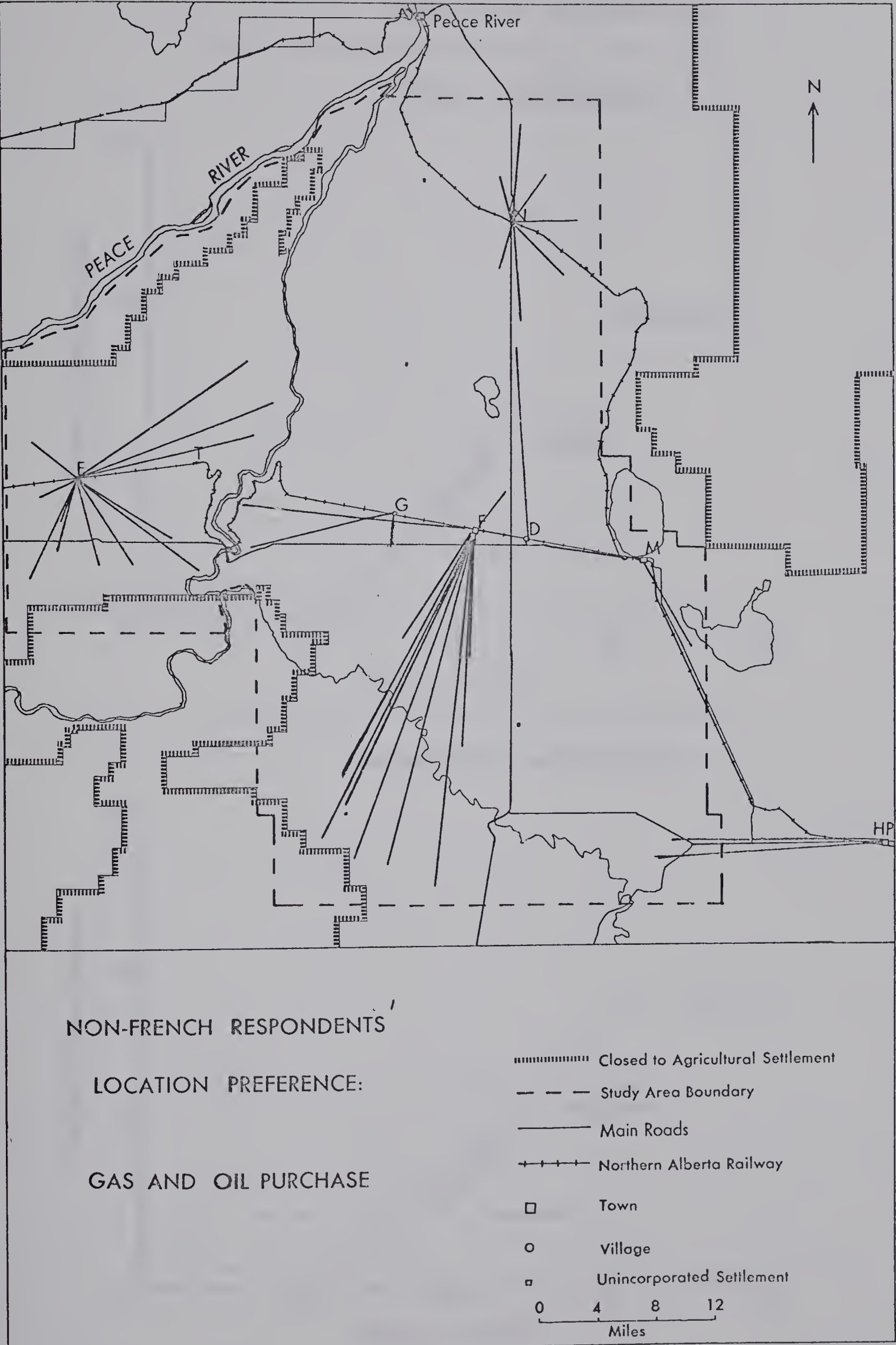


Figure 4.15

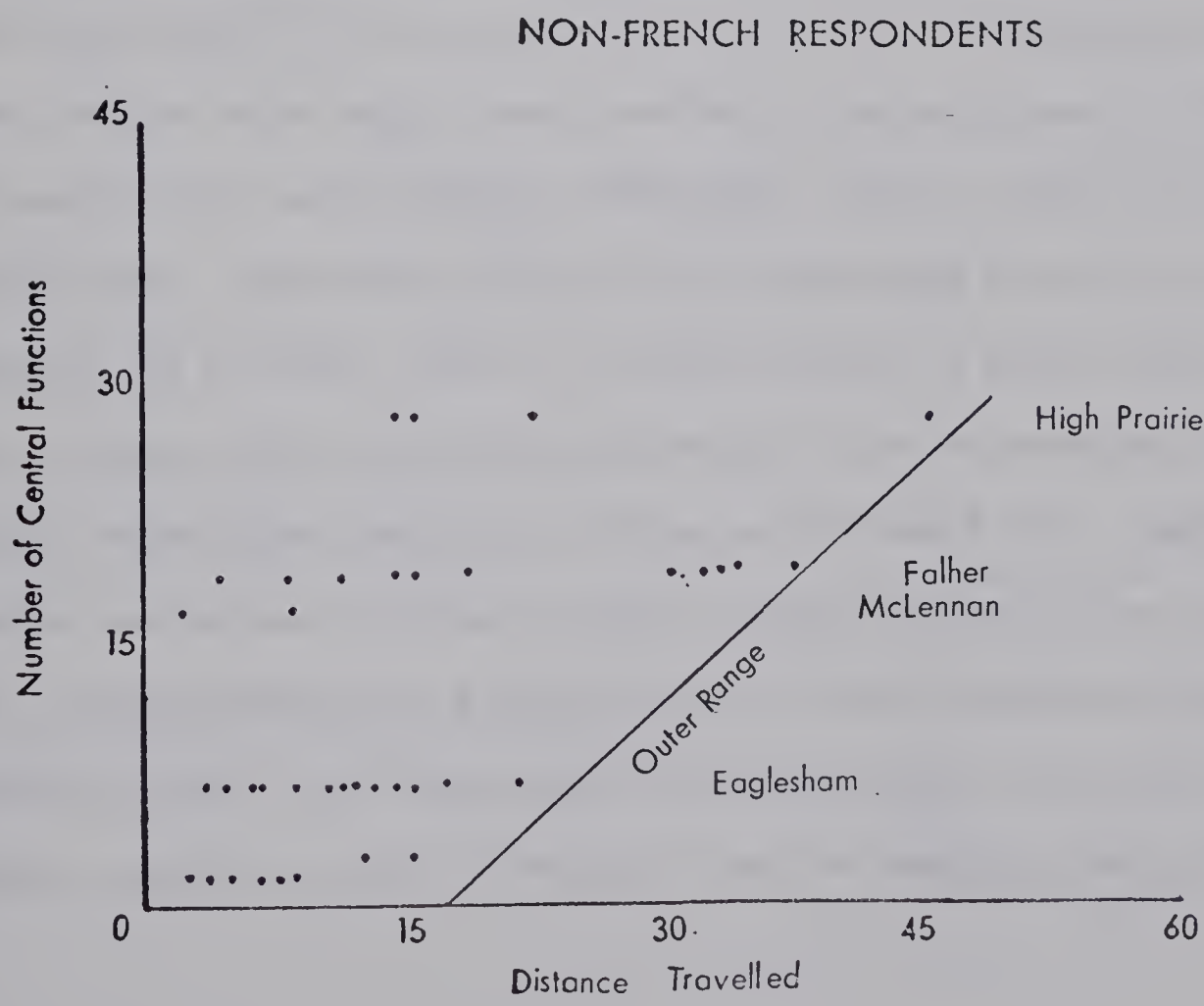
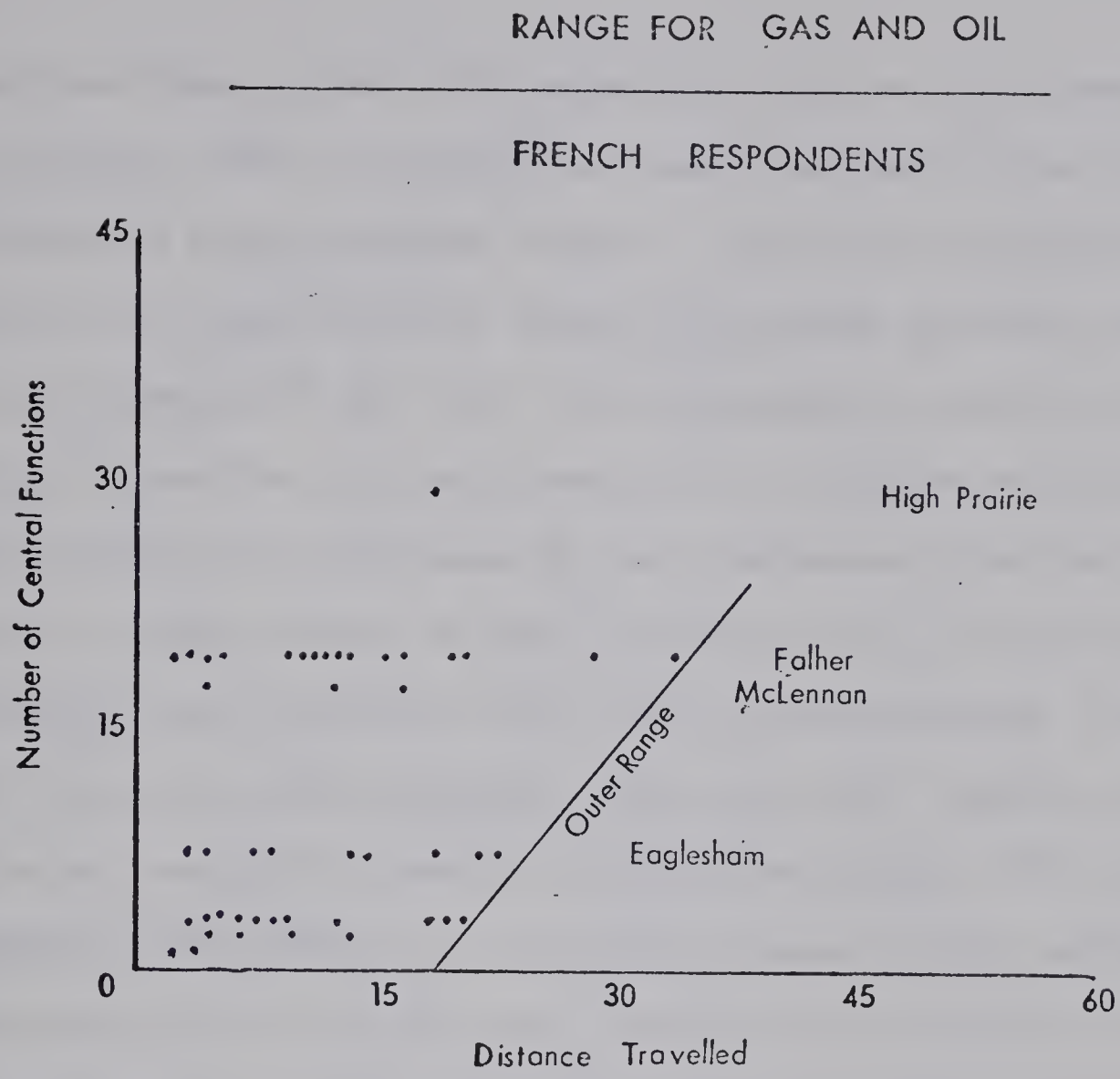


Figure 4.16

Though each item was dealt with separately they have to be combined in the analysis. These commodities are usually purchased at the elevator or, in the case of seed, from other farmers. Many of the respondents use neither while others use both, making the analysis difficult and the maps sketchy (Figures 4.17 and 4.18). The recognizable pattern varies little from the commodities previously examined. The English and French groups show no significant differences in their preferences: the French concentrating on Falher because of their proximity to it, with High Prairie attracting French and English alike from the south and east of the study area, the smaller towns attracting people from their immediate vicinity, and no one crossing the Smoky or the northern boundary of M.D. 130.

GROCERIES or FOOD SHOPPING. The results obtained in this section of the questionnaire are of little value. This is due to the failure to distinguish between everyday needs available in all centers (a minor function) and supermarket shopping (a major function) available only in Falher and the other major towns outside of the study area. The French word used in the questionnaire, NOURRITURE, does not imply any level of food shopping. Nonetheless some of the respondents seem satisfied with obtaining all of their needs at the small stores in places like Eaglesham or Nampa, while others were attracted to the supermarkets in High Prairie, Peace River and Falher, (Figures 4.19 and 4.20). English speaking people seem willing to travel farther for their food (Figure 4.21). Supermarkets have a very strong pull with the one at High Prairie attracting people from well inside the French Region and several respondents, English as well as French, cross the Smoky to shop in Falher.

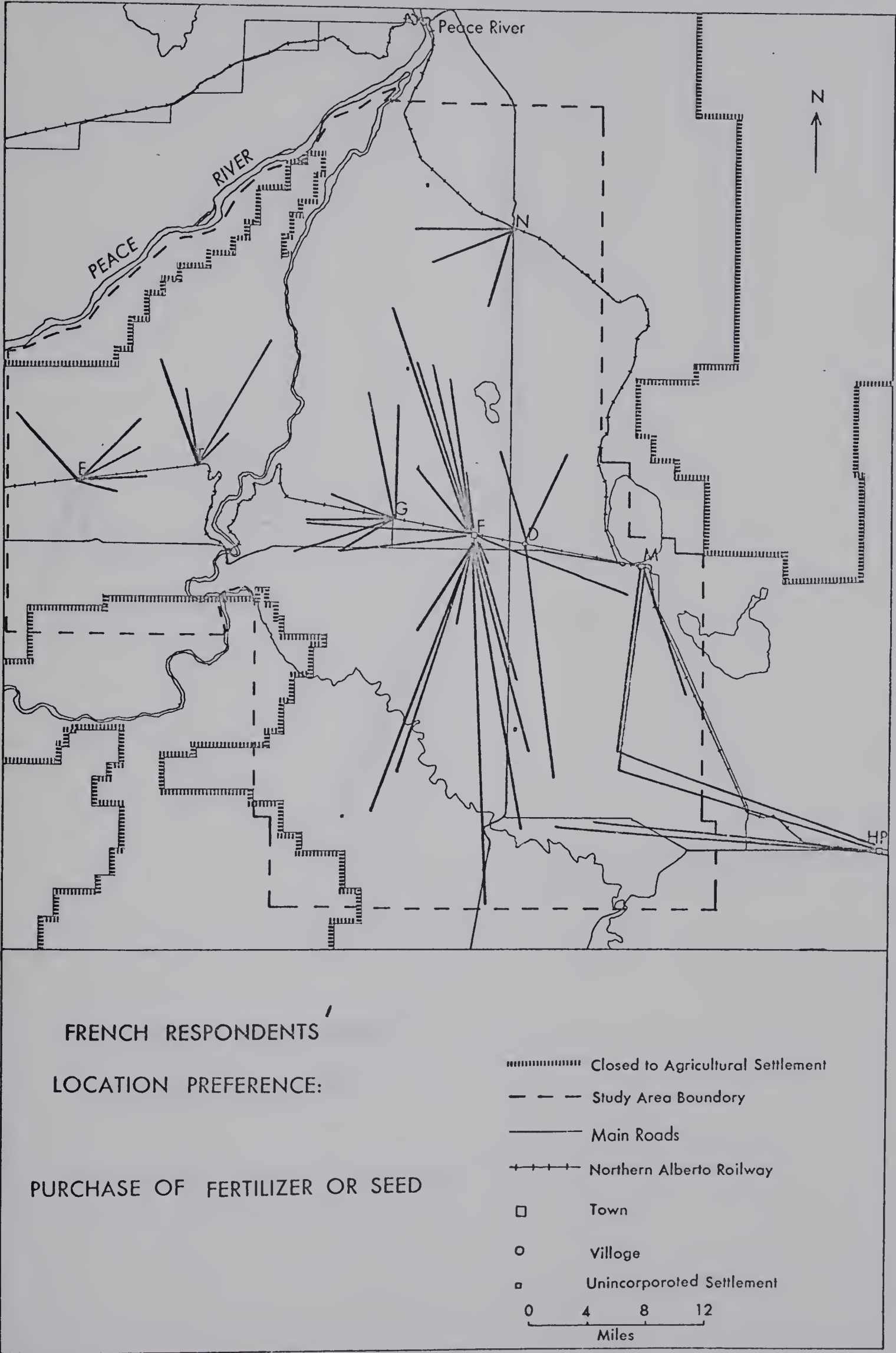


Figure 4.17

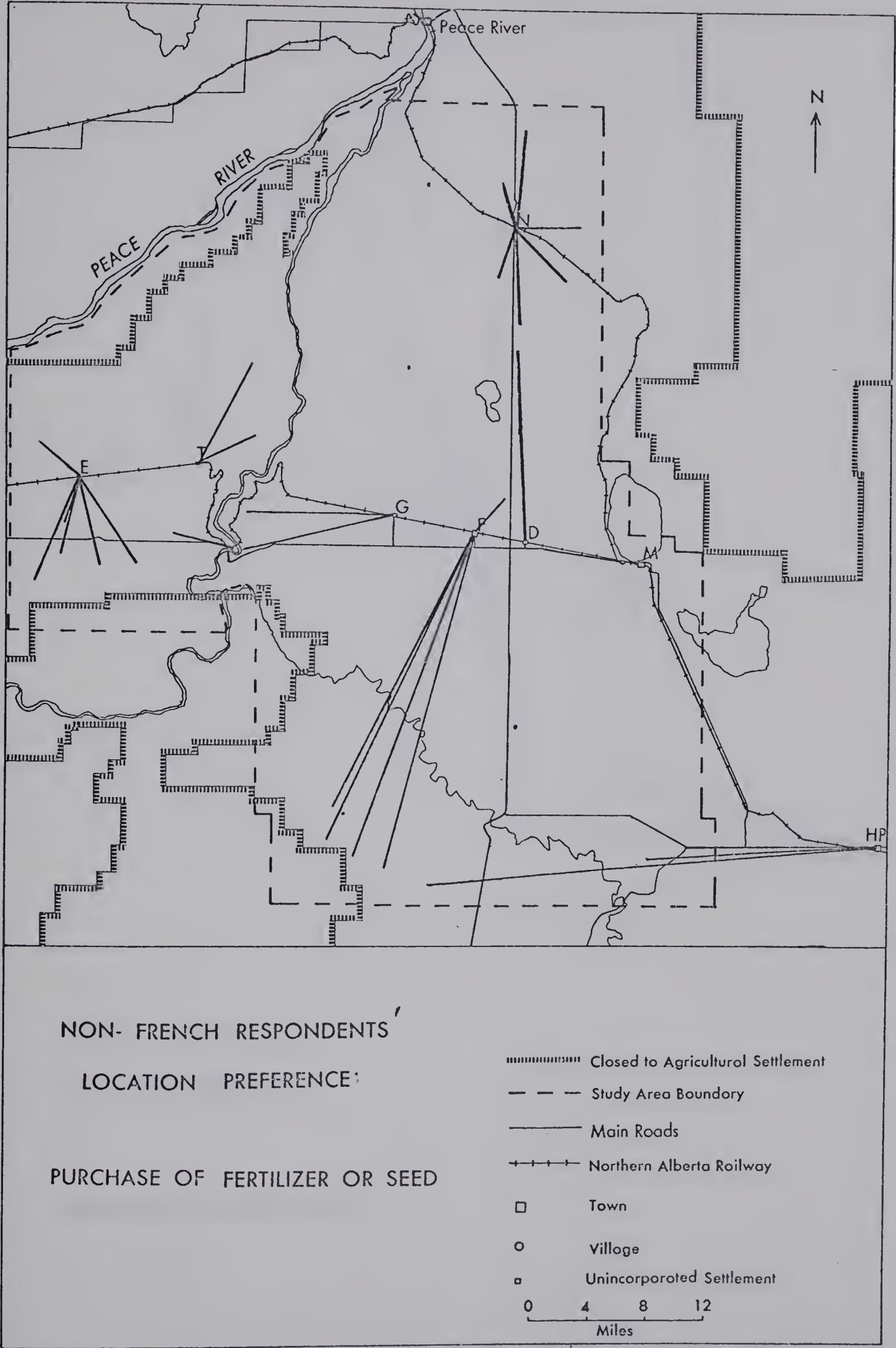


Figure 4.18

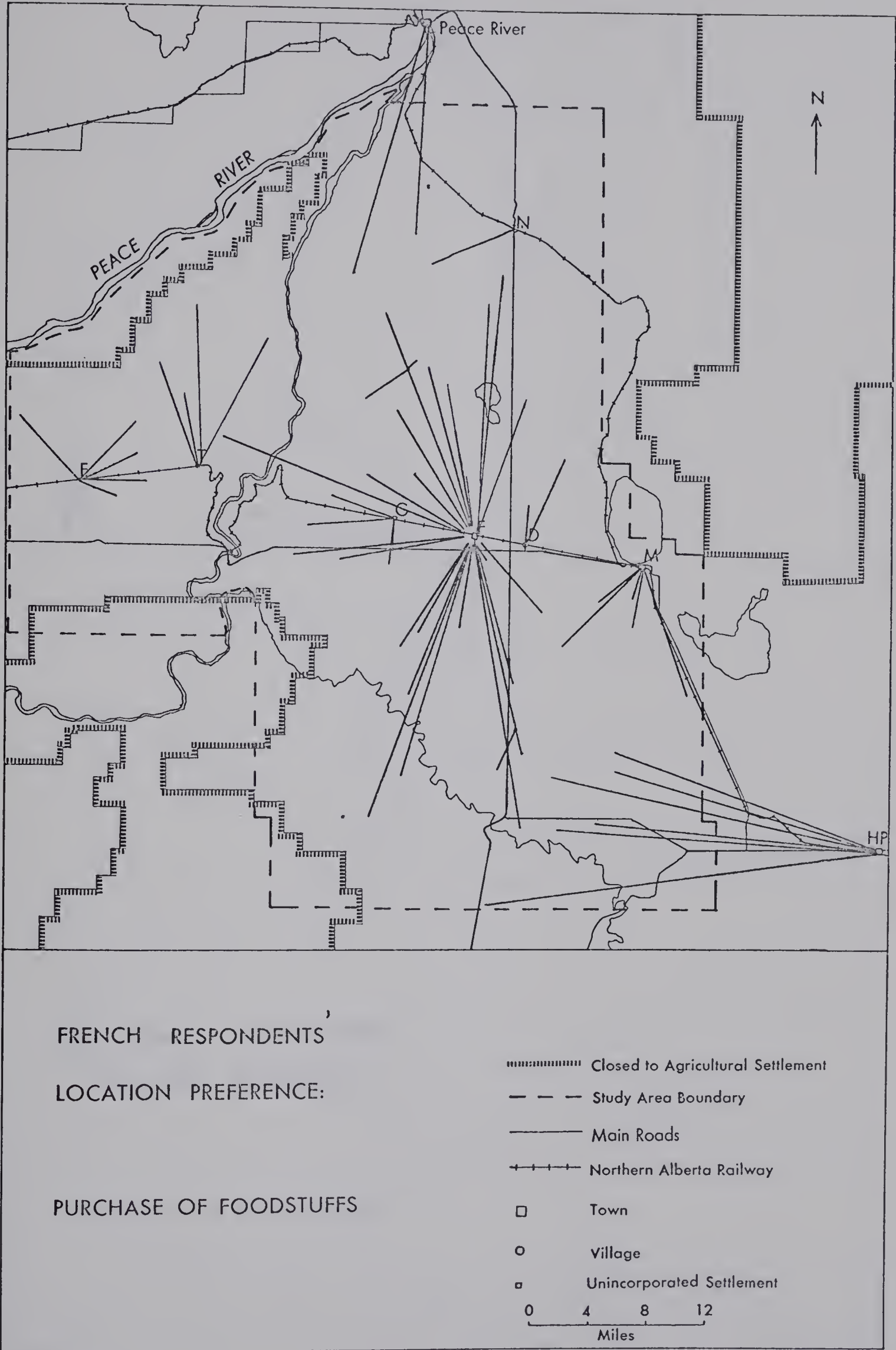


Figure 4.19

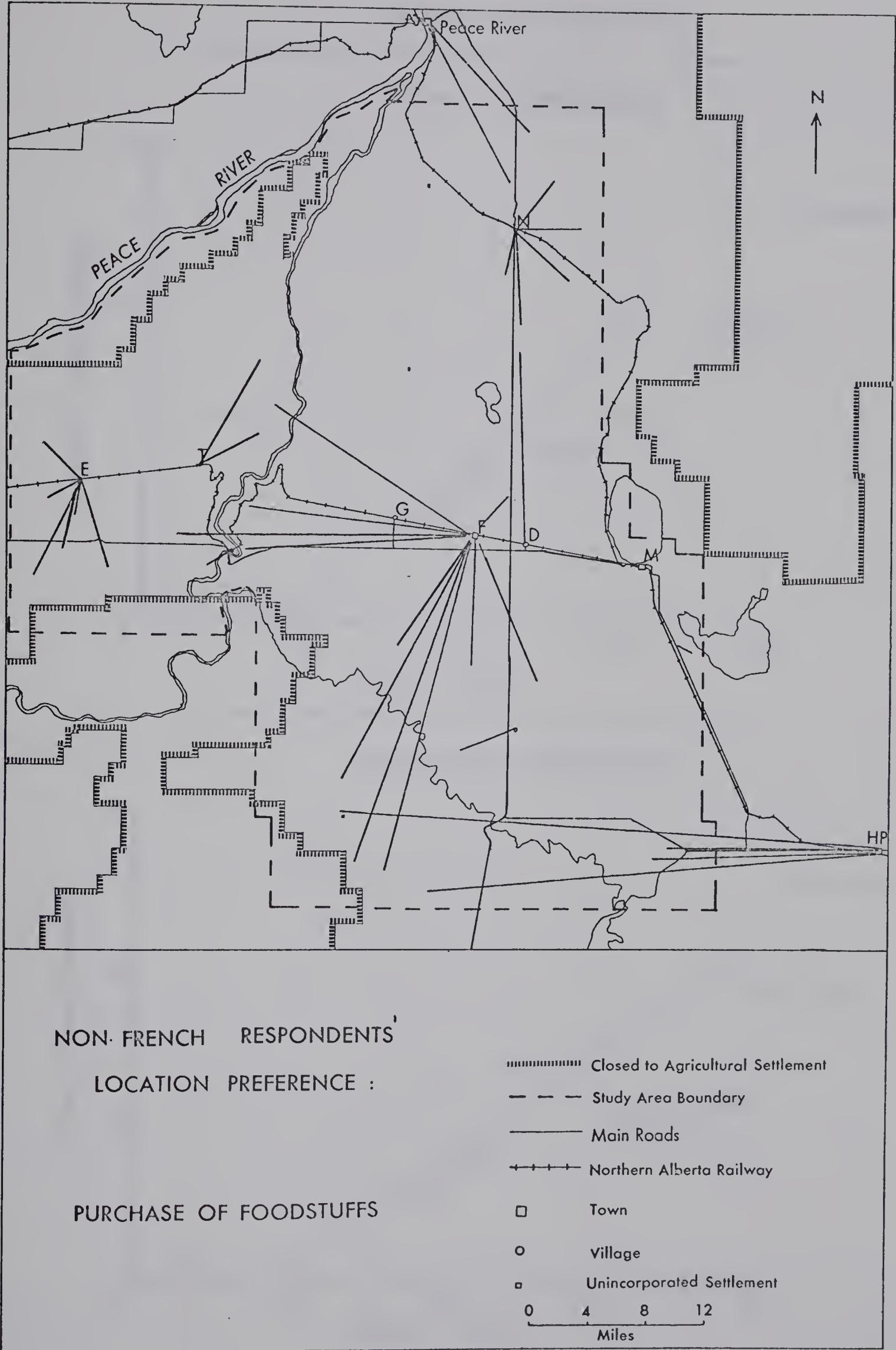


Figure 4.20

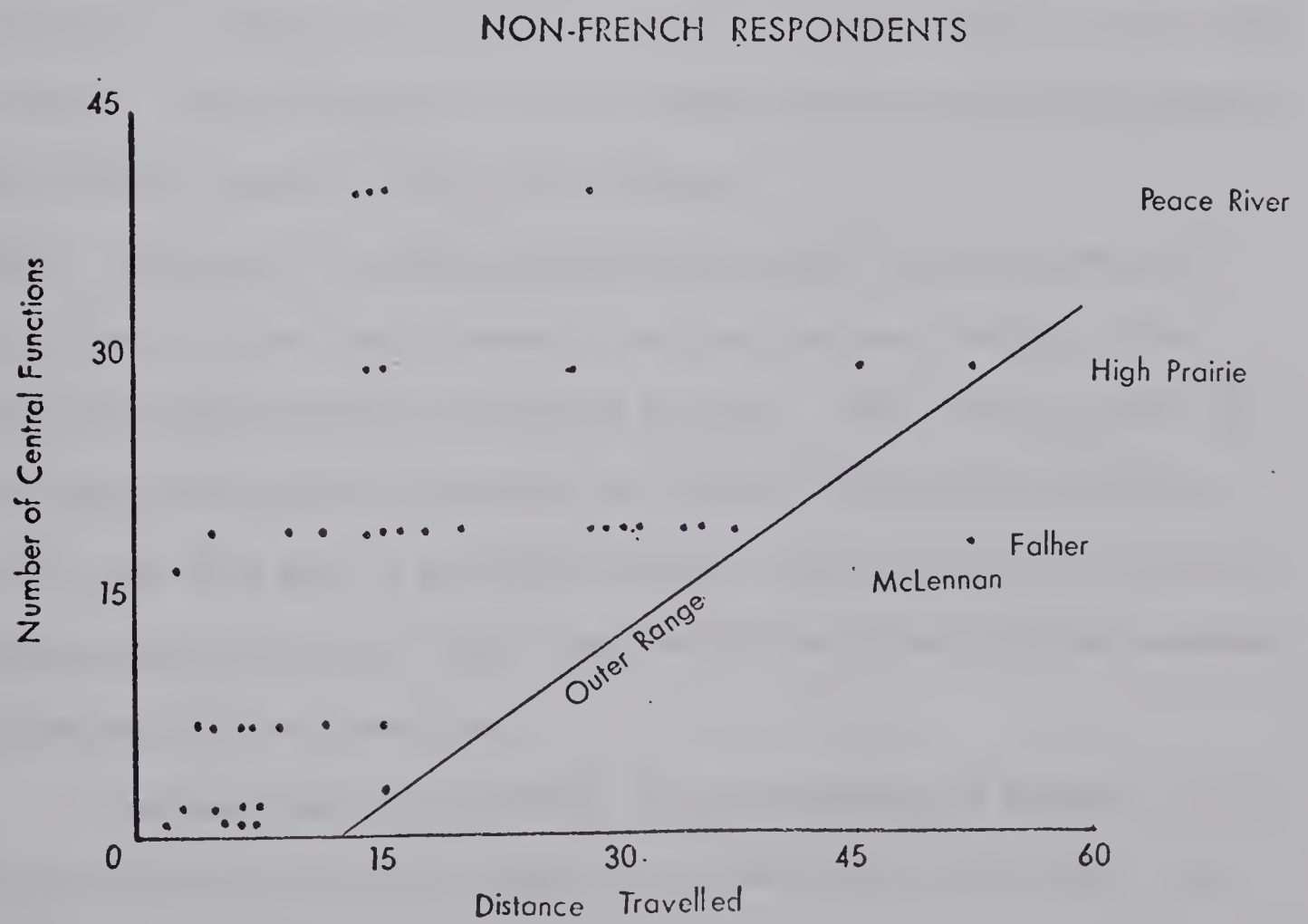
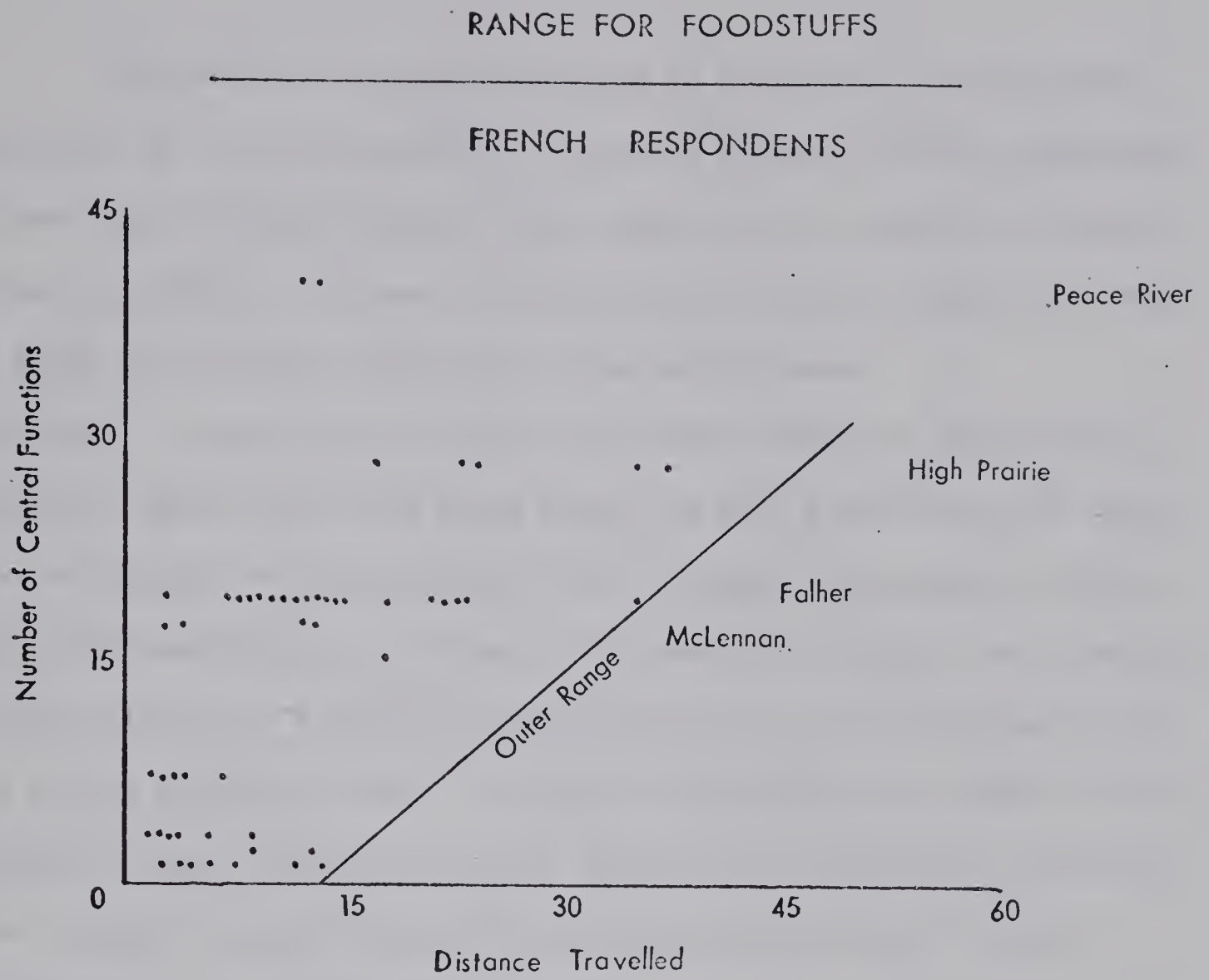


Figure 4.21

The goods and services examined so far are of a minor order. Though they do provide some clues to general patterns and help determine the importance of minor centers their usefulness in terms of the entire problem is limited. The rest of this section, with one exception, deals with goods and services found only in the major towns.

THE PHARMACY. Drug stores are found in Falher, McLennan, High Prairie, Valleyview, Spirit River and Peace River and sell a wide range of toiletries, stationery and candy in addition to drugs. The mapping of drug store preference (Figures 4.22 and 4.23) reveals a definite areal pattern. The Smoky River as a boundary is well brought out; all respondents west of it travel to Spirit River. Both High Prairie and Peace River are able to attract people, French as much as English, from within the predicted Falher trading area and from well within the French Core. McLennan attracts its customers from only a small area. Figure 4.24 shows that no respondents go against the pattern predicted by the model to visit Falher or McLennan, but some members of both groups living within the predicted Falher trading zone are attracted elsewhere.

CLOTHES. The sale of clothes is basically a major function and most people travel to the larger towns to do their personal buying. Two difficulties arose in the questioning however. Some people do most of their buying from store catalogues and had to think hard to remember the last time they made a personal purchase. Also, because of the misinterpretation of the word used, some French people were either shocked or embarrassed at the question.

The importance of clothing in the hierarchy is brought out by the fact that many people are drawn to Grande Prairie, 107 miles from

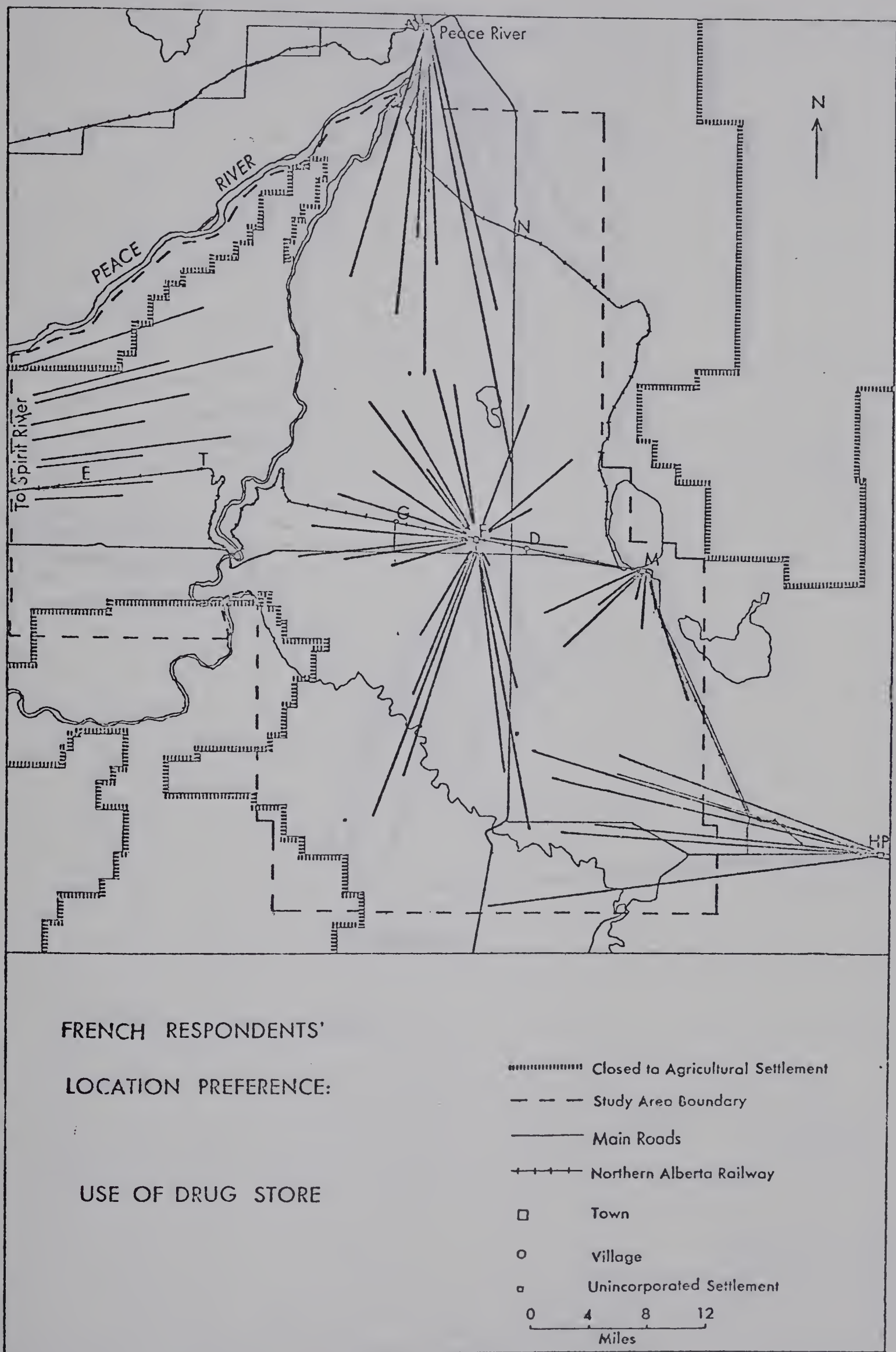


Figure 4.22

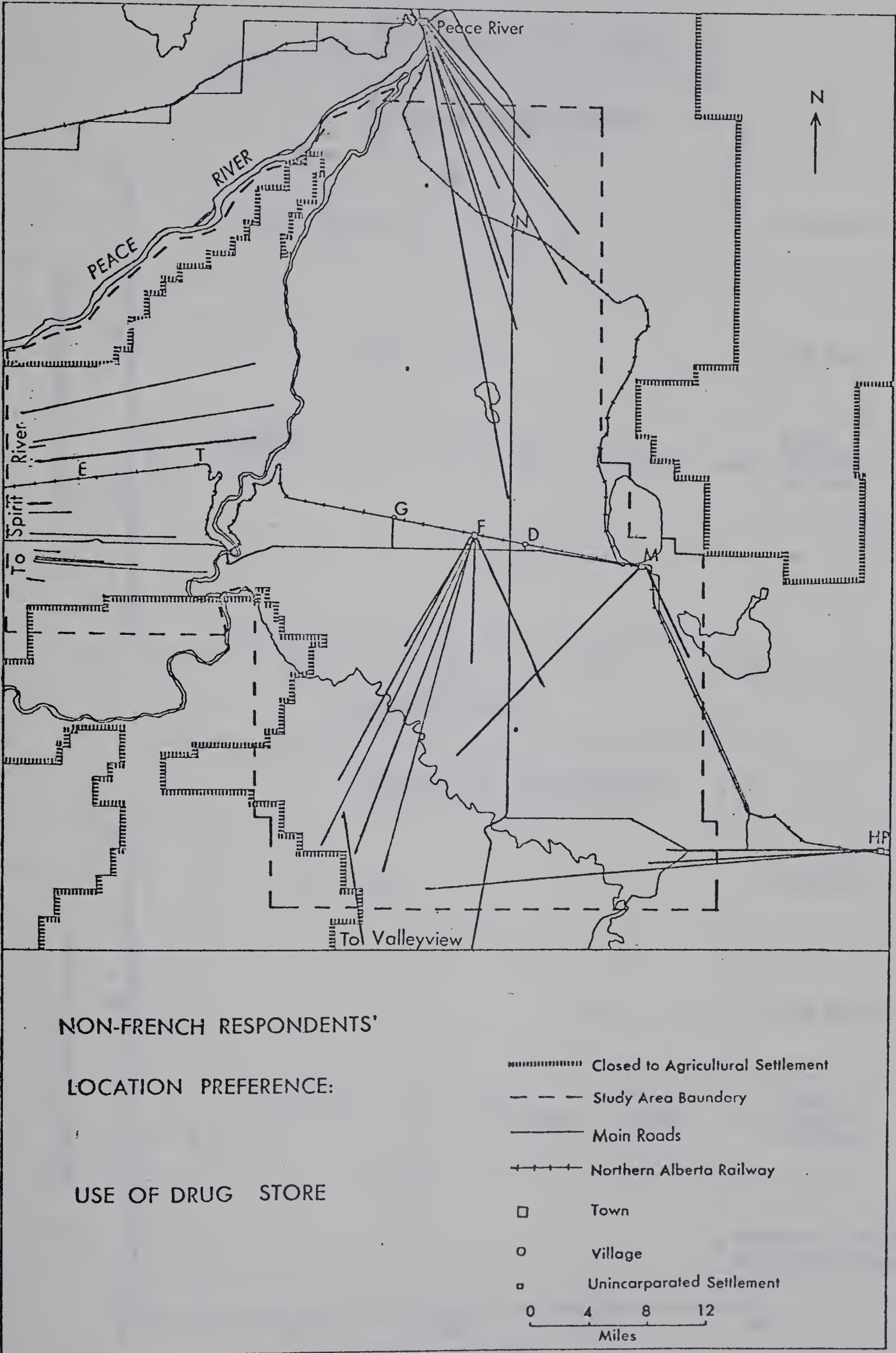


Figure 4.23

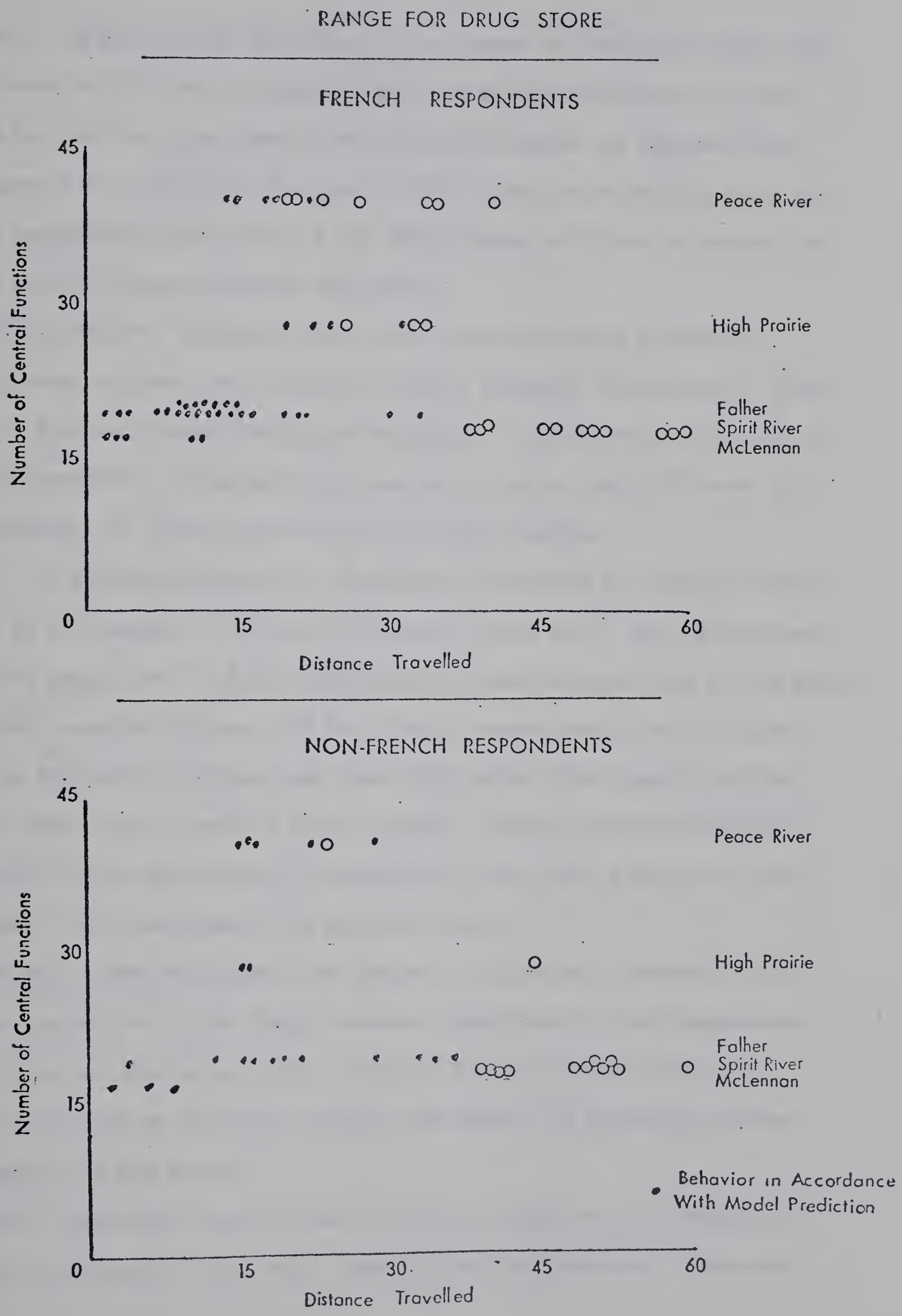


Figure 4.24

Falher. People west of the Smoky and south-west of the Little Smoky are attracted to this large center. High Prairie and Peace River are also able to reach into the French Core attracting French and English alike (Figures 4.25 and 4.26). The use of Spirit River is relatively small and some respondents living west of the Smoky travel to Falher, a pattern unlike most of those previously discussed.

BANKING SERVICES. Chartered banks and Treasury Branches utilized by study area residents are located in Falher, McLennan, High Prairie, Peace River, Rycroft, Grande Prairie and Eaglesham. In Girouxville there is a Caisse Populaire, a savings bank, popular in Quebec, and affiliated with the Church. It is utilized entirely by French people.

The area dependent on the French Core towns for banking facilities is the largest of any good or service looked into. Both French and English people come to Falher from north of Jean Cote and west of the Smoky for this service (Figures 4.28 and 4.29). Several people hold accounts in two different locations, one where they market their grain, and the other where they do most of their shopping. Others say their choice is affected by the possibility of obtaining a loan at one branch more than another. Five respondents had no bank account.

INSURANCE. Insurance agents are located in Eaglesham, Girouxville and Nampa, as well as in the larger centers, though most of the respondents prefer to use the latter group. Falher's field stretches across the Smoky and north of Jean Cote for both the French and non-French groups (Figures 4.31 and 4.32).

DOCTOR. Study area residents visit doctors in High Prairie, McLennan, Falher, Valleyview, Peace River, Spirit River and Edmonton. From maps

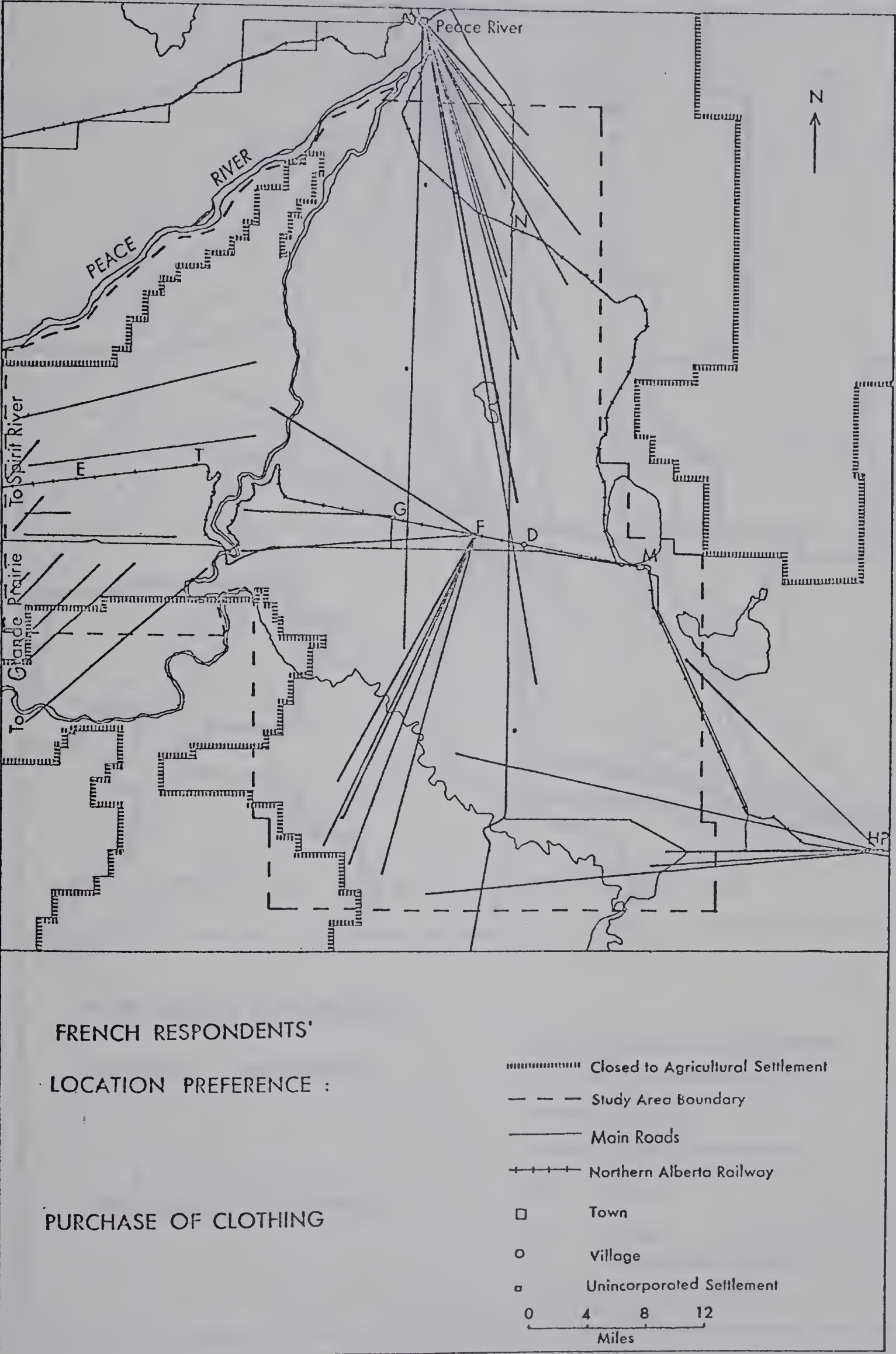


Figure 4.25

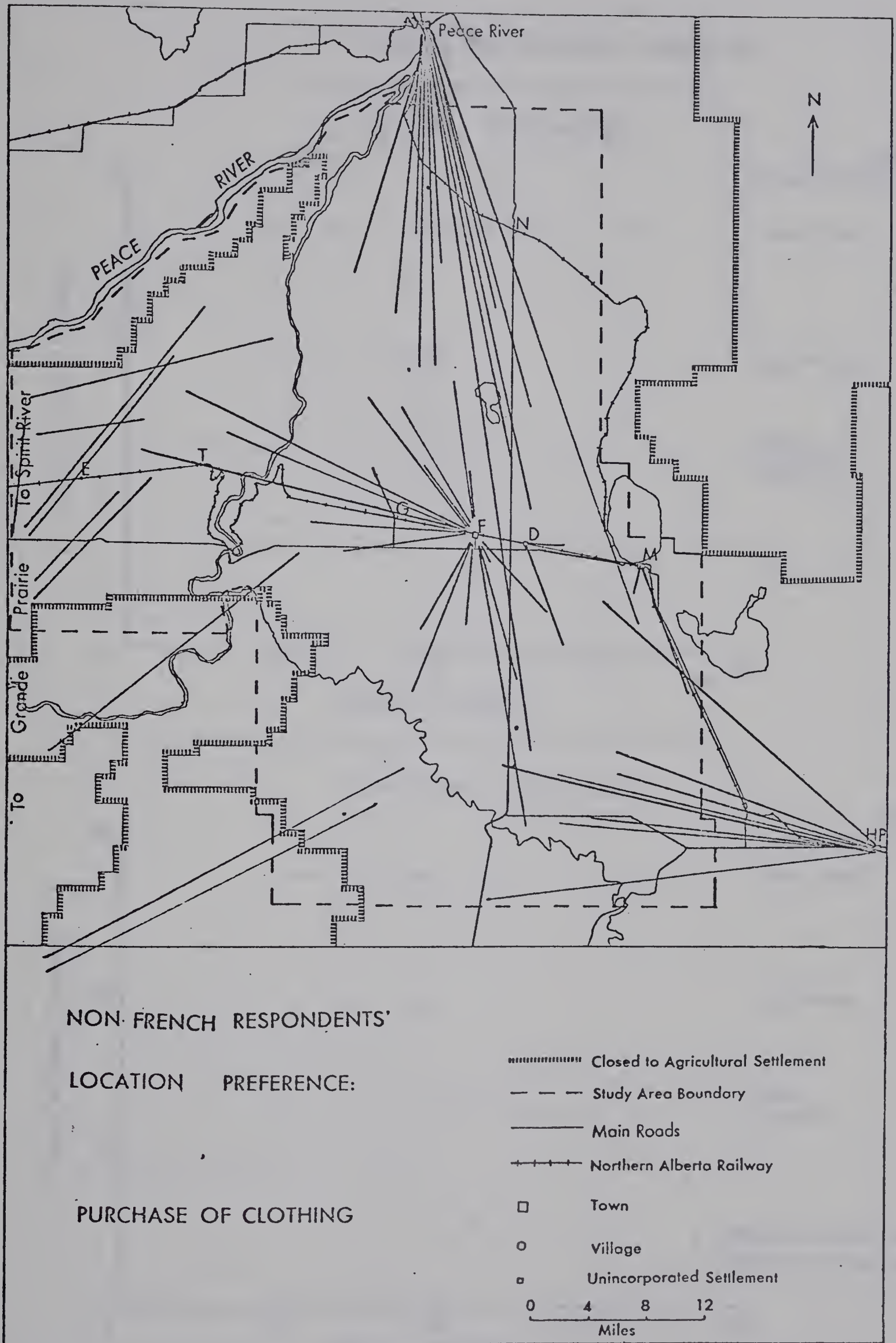


Figure 4.26

RANGE FOR CLOTHING PURCHASE

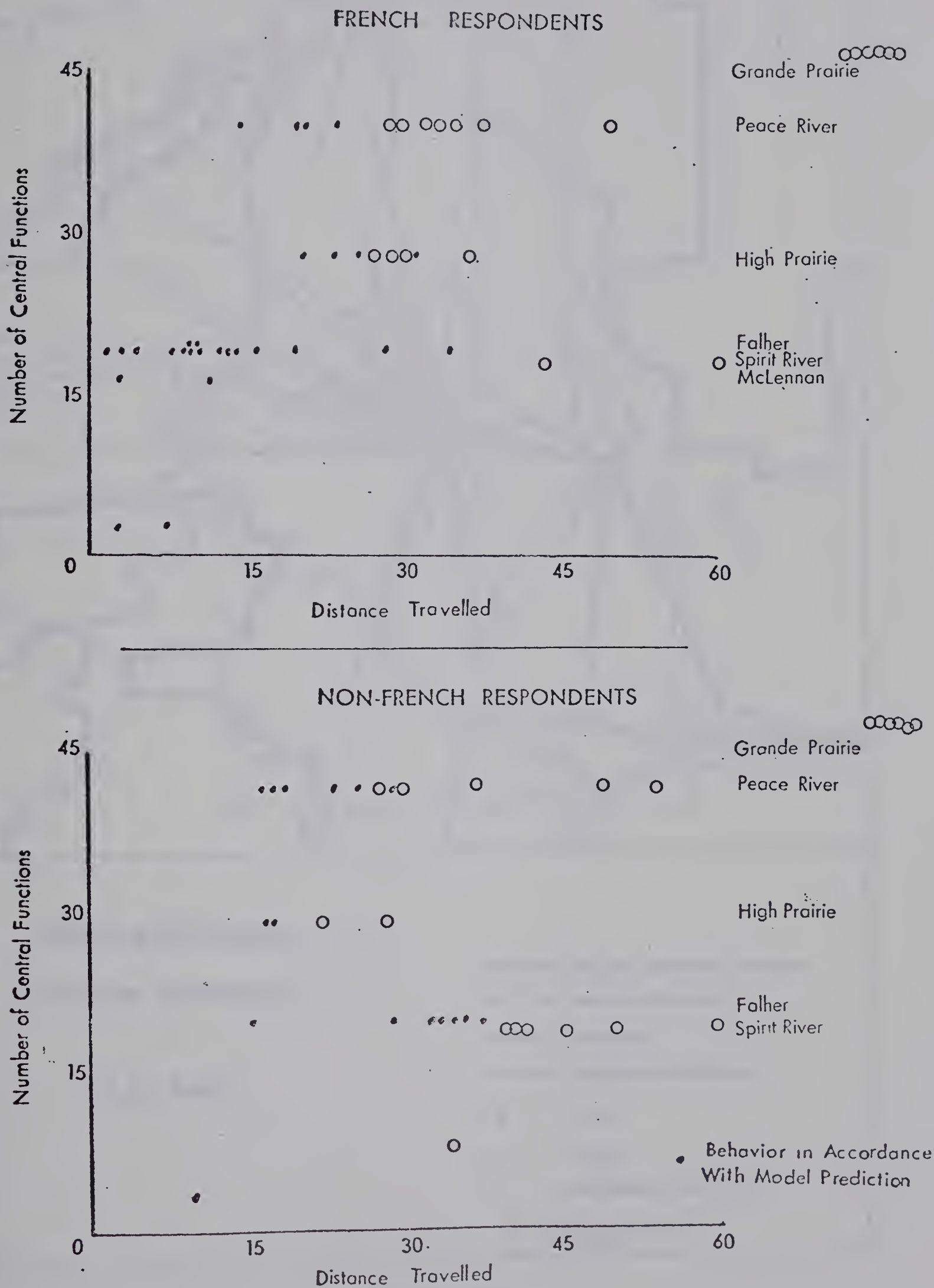


Figure 4.27

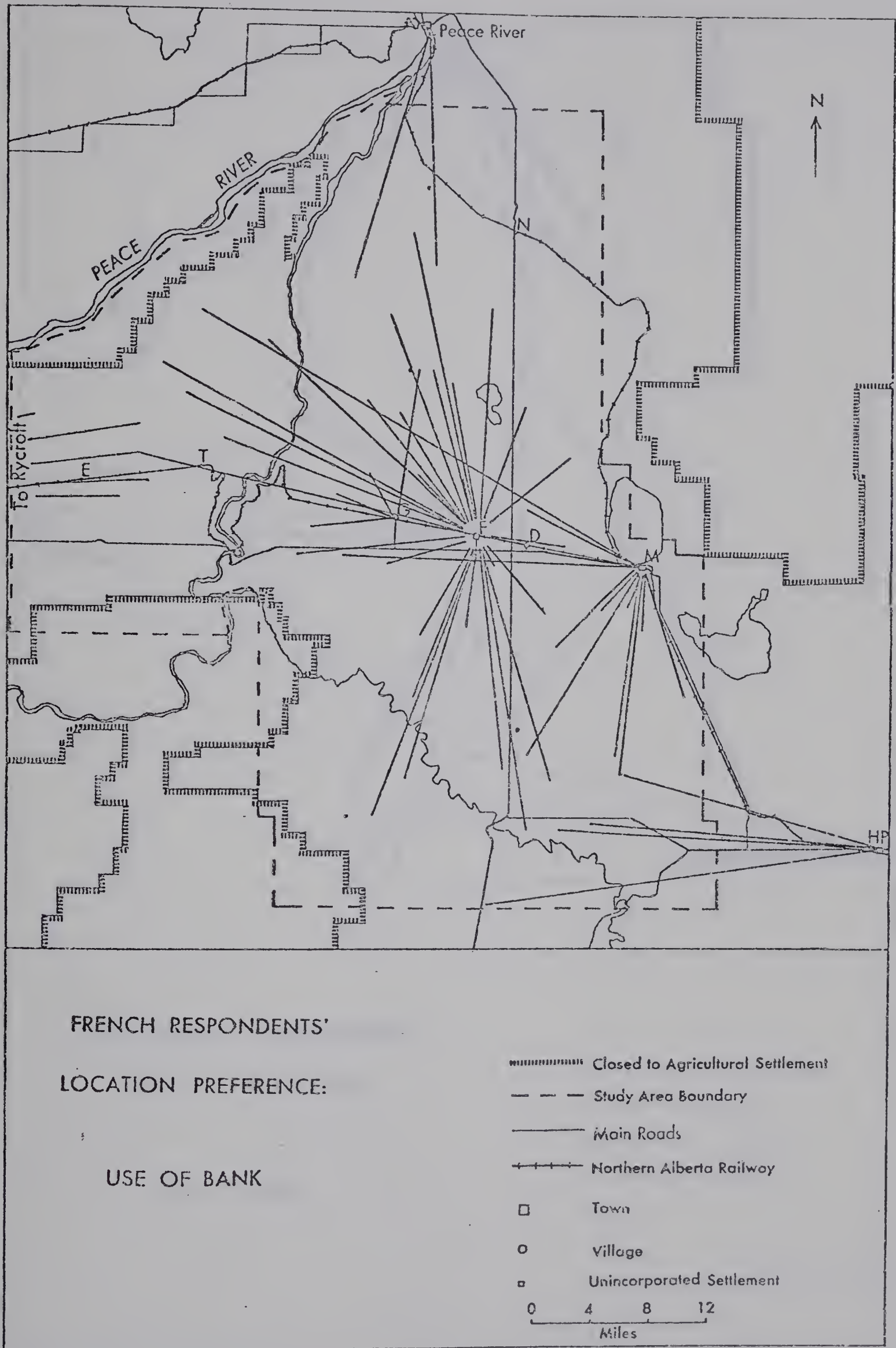


Figure 4.28

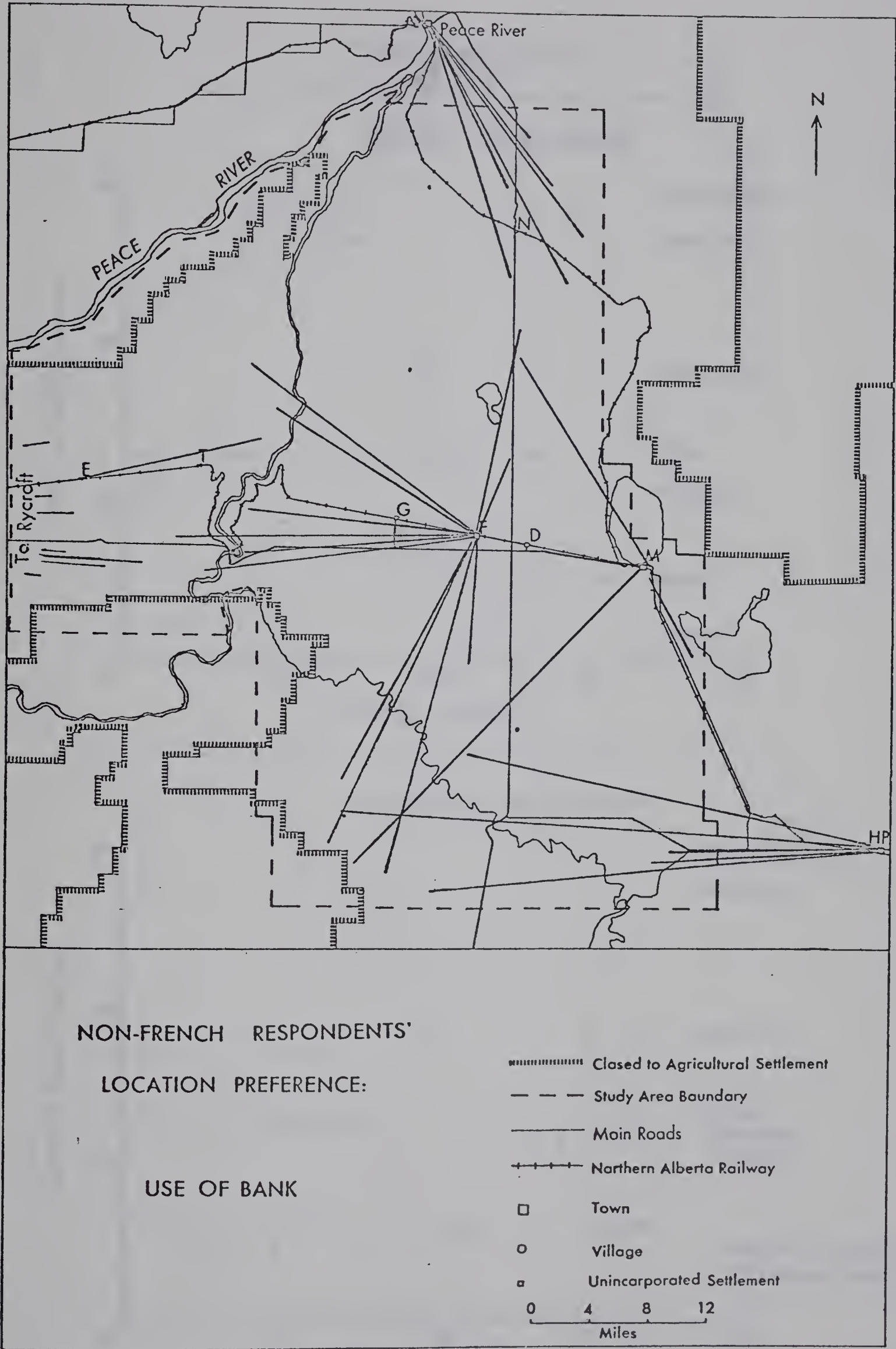


Figure 4.29

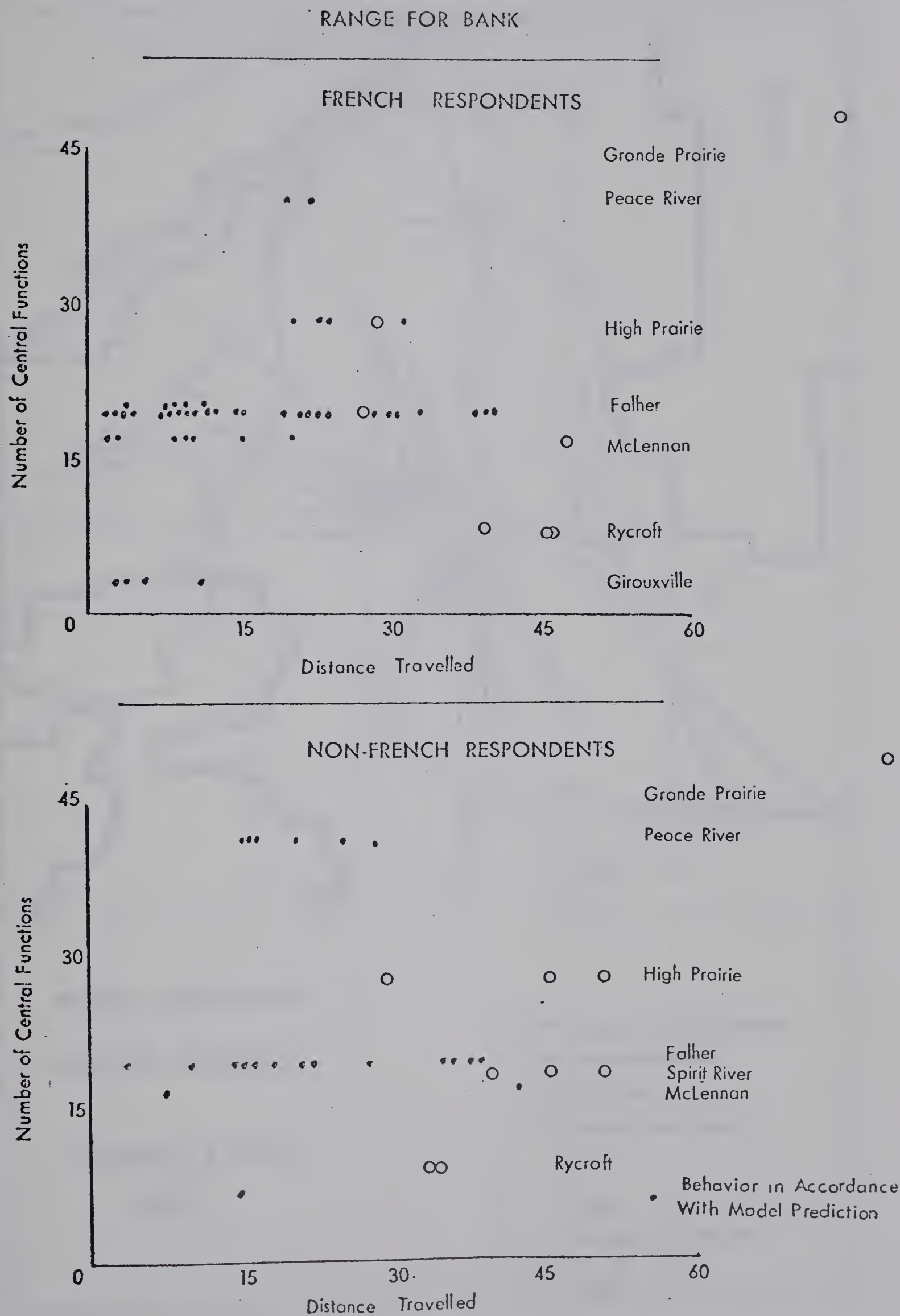


Figure 4.30

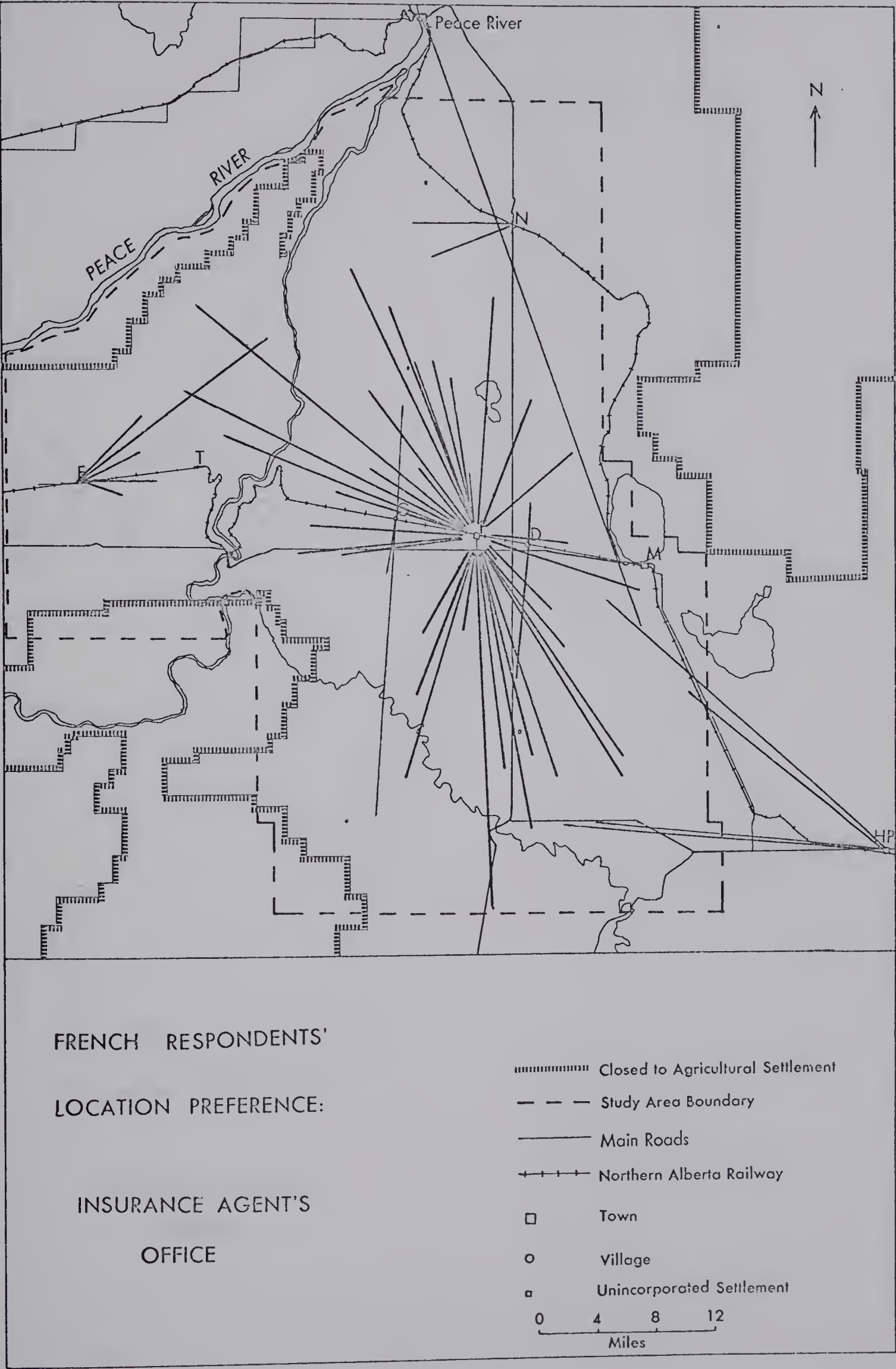


Figure 4.31

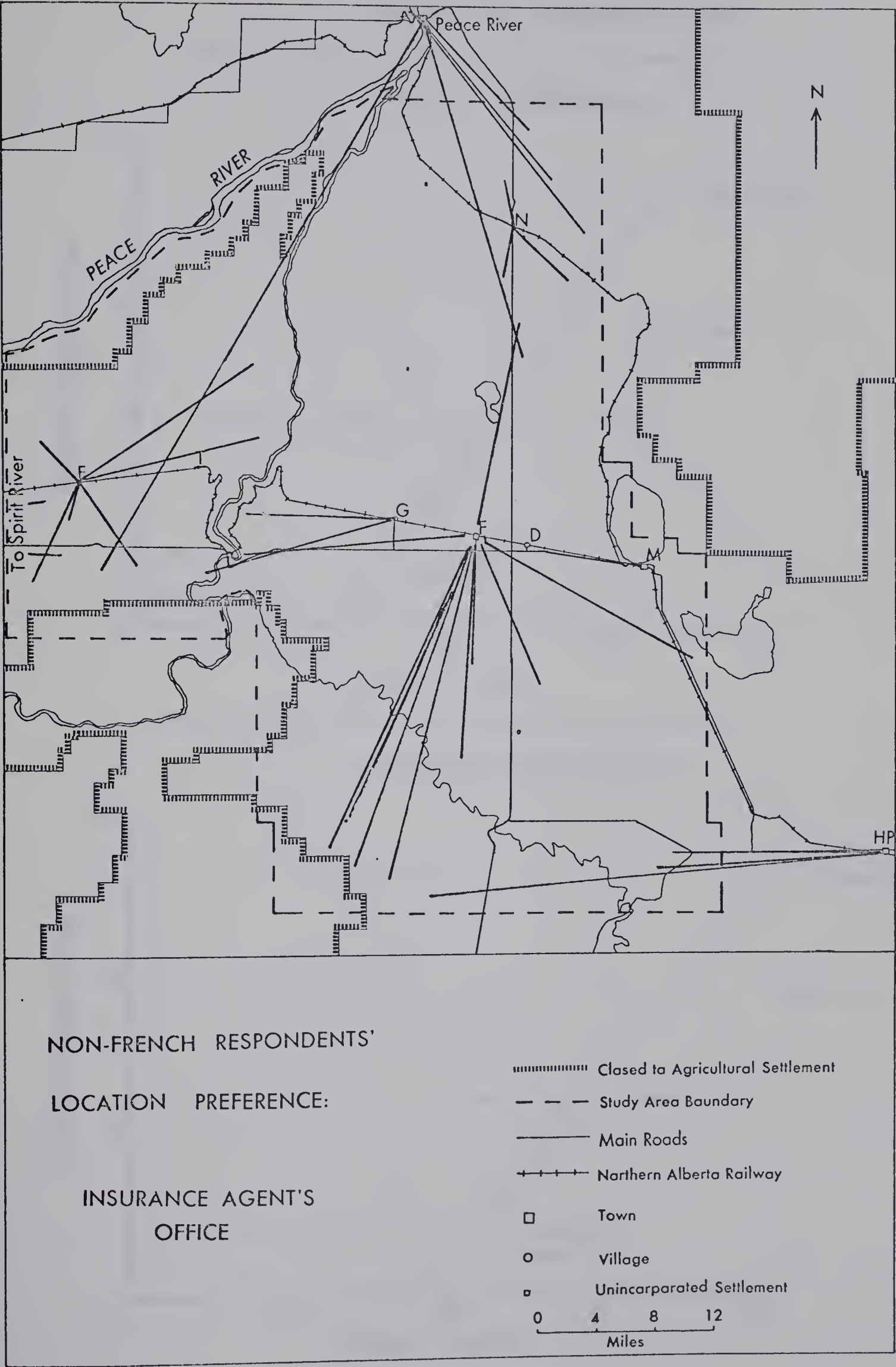


Figure 4.32

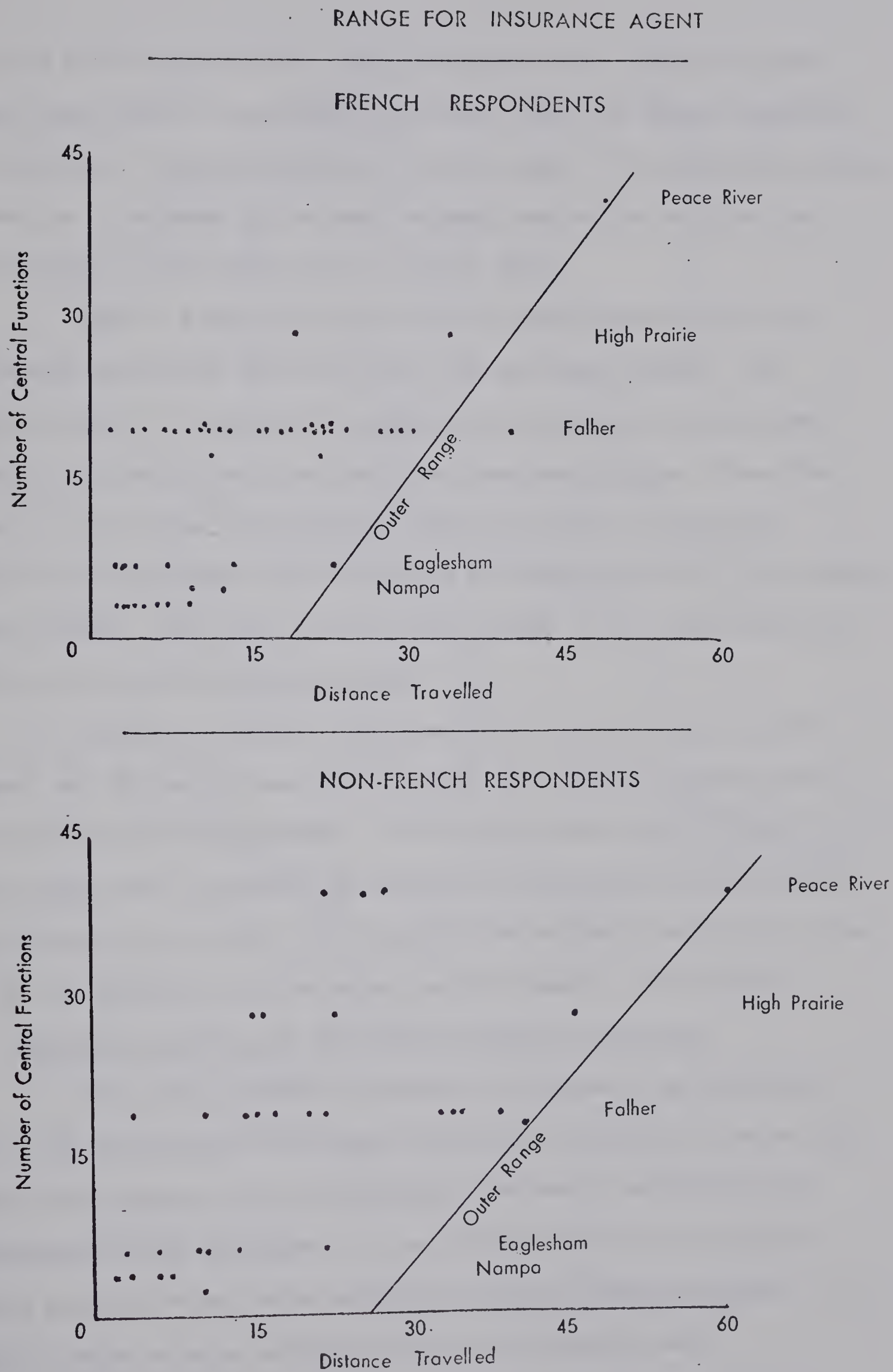


Figure 4.33

4.34 and 4.35 it appears that there is almost no use of Falher by non-French group people, even though the doctors there are English speaking. No respondents, French or English, cross the Smoky. The relatively strong attraction to McLennan is, at least in part, due to the fact that the only hospital in the study area is located there.

Table 4.2 sums up the use of the French Core towns for the five major services by both the French and non-French groups. The greatest degree of attraction to Falher is shown in the insurance and banking services for both the French and non-French groups. These two types of services are the only ones which are capable of regularly attracting French people from outside of the predicted French Core trading area to Falher. The pull to Falher and McLennan is the least when medical services or clothes are required.

The English utilize the French Core towns much less than the French, and the gap between the two varies for different services and at different distances from Falher. In the areas close to and distant from this major French town the widest gap between the two groups is with respect to the purchase of clothes. On the whole the narrowest gap exists in the use of the pharmacy while the widest is with respect to the doctor.

Two Minor Variables in the Study of Falher's Importance

It is also possible to examine the dependence on the French Core towns in relation to two minor variables - the specific center with which Falher competes for an individual's patronage, and the "era of settlement" of the respondent. To do this the French and non-French groups are sub-divided and a regression analysis graphing distance against number of major services obtained in Falher is used.

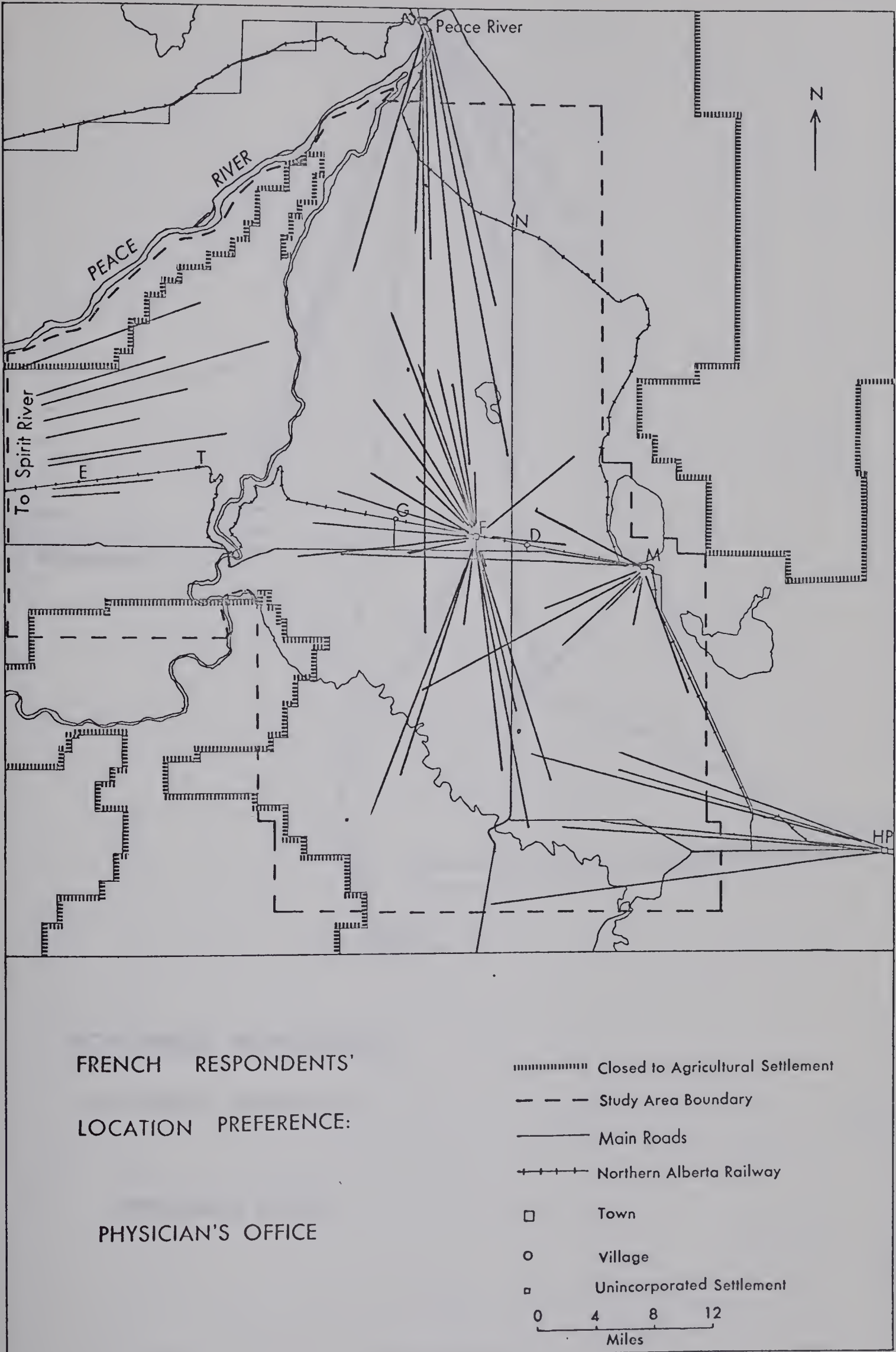


Figure 4.34

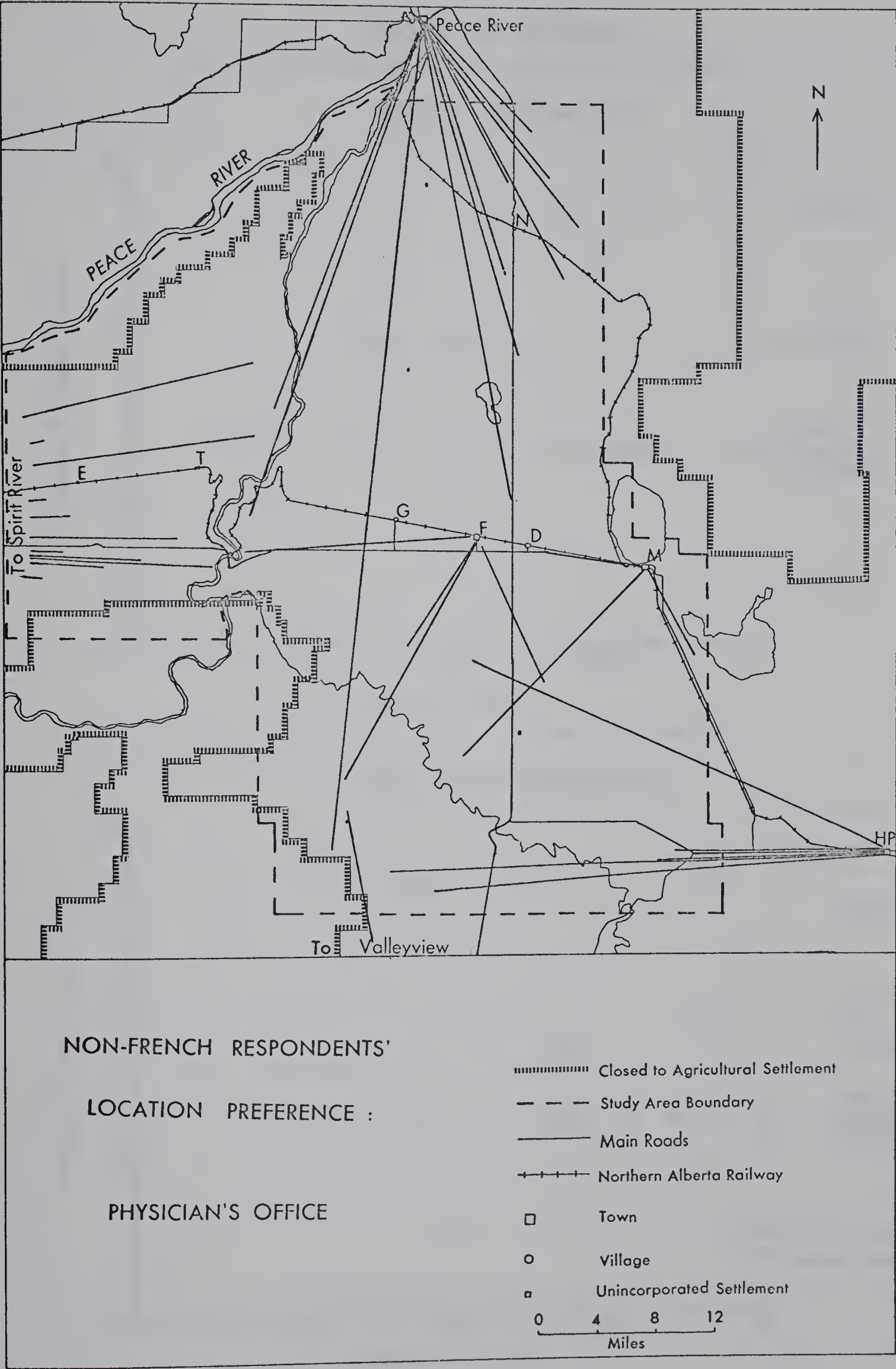


Figure 4.35

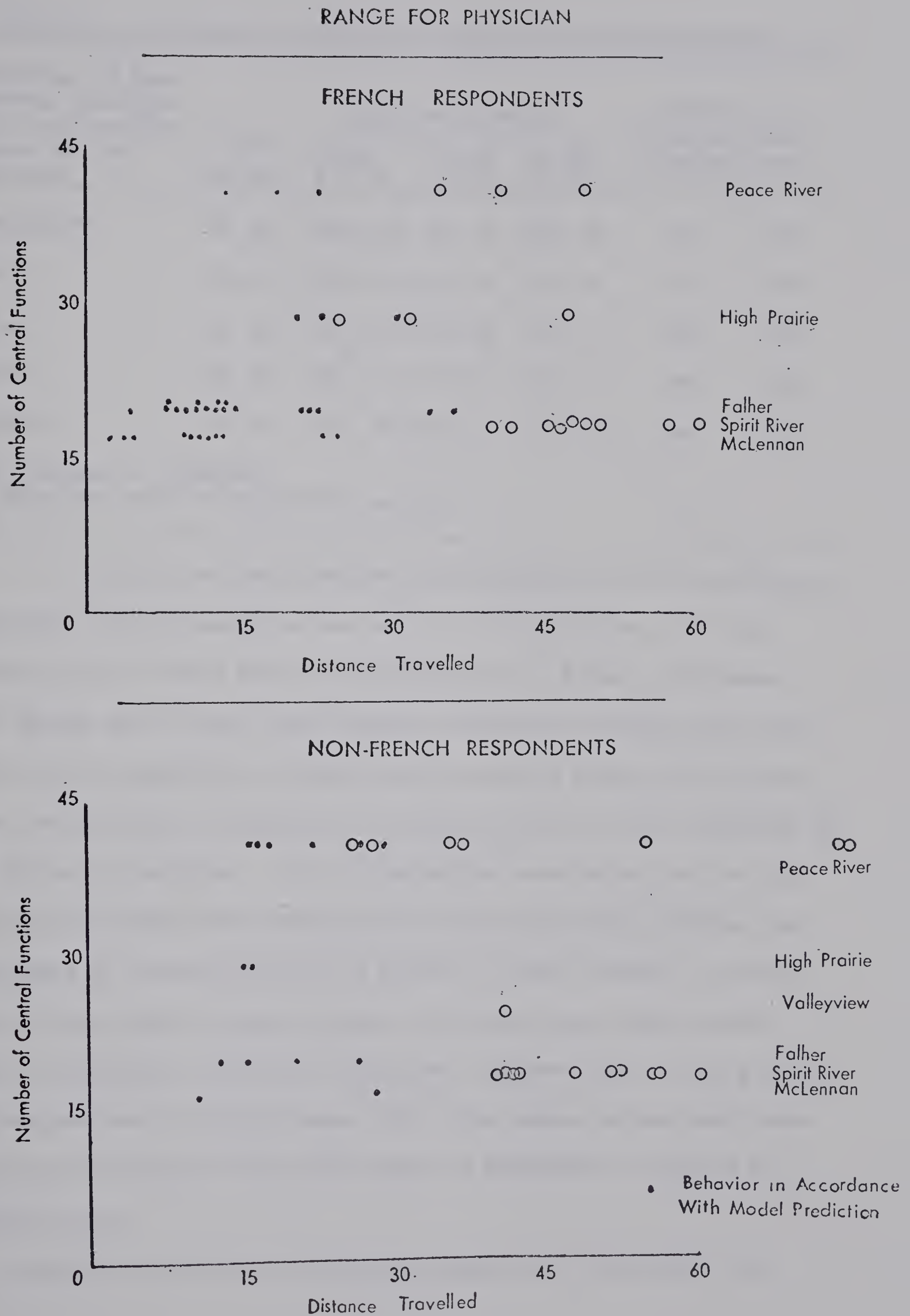


Figure 4.36

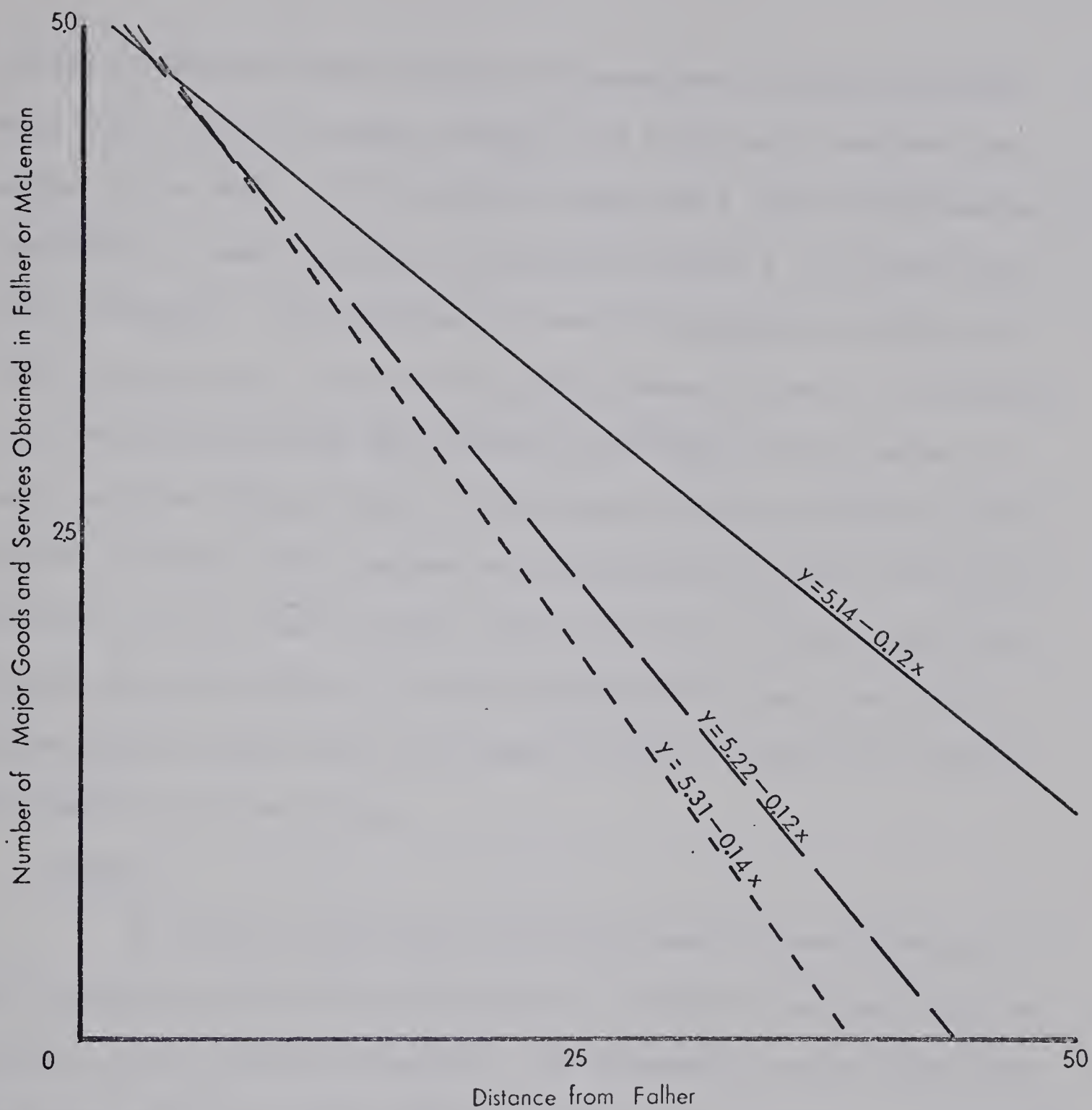
Table 4.2 - Dependence on French Core Towns for Various Services

Percentage of Res- pondents Complying with Predicted Be- havior for the Following	Total		Relative Location						Outside of Predicted Falher Trading Area	
			0-20		21-40		41-60			
	F*	E*	F	E	F	E	F	E		
Insurance**	97	62	100	100	94	67	100	56	67	100
Bank	89	70	100	100	91	70	67	50	67	100
Drugs	64	53	92	100	65	56	22	27	100	100
Doctor	62	33	85	75	65	31	33	21	84	100
Clothes	49	33	70	40	35	35	50	25	100	100

* F = French; E = English
** Those who replied "Eaglesham" omitted.

Firstly the French and non-French groups were sub-divided into those who tend to frequent or are near to (a) Peace River, (b) High Prairie and (c) Spirit River as an alternative to Falher or McLennan. Both groups tend to show their greatest dependence on Falher when Peace River is the competition and the least when Spirit River is the competi- tion, using either the absolute or relative location of the respondent as the distance from Falher. This is surprising considering the size and proximity of Peace River compared to the other towns, but confirms the importance of the Smoky River as a barrier to local movement. However, the two Peace River household groups are the only ones which exhibit both an acceptable correlation coefficient (greater than .5) and possess the desired level of significance (.05). The others may not meet these requirements because of the small number of households in each of the various groups.

Secondly the French and non-French groups were sub-divided into



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISTANCE FROM AND DEPENDENCE ON
FALHER-McLENNAN, FRENCH RESPONDENTS

————	Pre-War Settlers	$R = -.616$
- - - -	Respondents of Local Origin	$R = -.739$
- . - .	Post-War Settlers	$R = -.805$

Figure 4.37

(a) the pre-War settlers, (b) those who were born and grew up in the study area, and (c) post-War settlers, and a regression analysis was carried out on each. Only the French group had a large enough number of respondents in each sub-group to maintain at least a .05 significance level throughout. The dependence of each of the groups on Falher is shown in Figure 4.37. Each of the groups shows at least a $-.6$ correlation coefficient between the distance from Falher and the number of major services obtained there. The pre-War settlers are the most dependent on Falher while the post-War settlers use the town the least. This may be due to the fact that some of the early settlers speak less English than the others do. Some respondents mentioned that of the French people living west of the Smoky it was only these "old timers" who regularly visited Falher.

Summary

It has been shown that the French group is more dependent on the French Core towns than the non-French, though not as completely dependent as was originally expected. The dependence on the French Core decreases with distance from Falher for both groups, though the difference between the two is greatest in the zero to twenty mile range. Insurance and banking services are the greatest attractions to the French Core towns, while the behavior of the non-French group differs most with respect to the doctor. Low order services provide little evidence of group differences. The attraction to Spirit River is extremely strong and defies a gravity model applied to the area, bringing out the strength of the Smoky River as a boundary.

CHAPTER V

THE FOCUS OF THE FRENCH REGION - SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHENOMENA

This chapter treats features which are social, political or administrative in nature. The last two categories offer the resident little choice since administrative regions are fixed by the government body concerned.

Political and Administrative Areal Organization

The three levels of government in Canada - federal, provincial and municipal - all play a part in the spatial organization of the French Region. The boundaries of any of these jurisdictional areas, however, were set up with little regard for the distribution of such phenomena as ethnic groups and consequently the people have little choice in the centers they use.

The only federal government agency to affect the study area directly is the Post Office. Post offices are located in Falher, Girouxville, Donnelly, McLennan, Nampa, Jean Côté, Guy, Tangent, Eaglesham, Culp and Whitemud Creek. There is no mail delivery, either rurally or in the towns; post office boxes are rented for a small fee. Rural people tend to use the closest post office, though there are no boundaries affecting a person's choice of center. Several people had boxes in more than one town.

The Provincial Government and its agencies are by far the most important. Smoky River Municipal District, 130, forms a large part of the study area (see Figure 1.2), while the areas to the north and west are part of Improvement Districts 17 and 19 respectively. Falher is the administrative center of M.D. 130 and as such has a number of provincial government offices. According to the Revised Statutes of Alberta (1955)

the powers and duties of a municipal district administration concerns such domains: as highways and public works, snow fences, drainage ditches, traffic, public health, water, gas and electricity. For any of these matters the residents of M.D. 130, whether French or English, must deal with Falher, and those beyond the district boundaries must go elsewhere. Even though there are no powers under the Municipal Council's authority which could be used to express the views and wishes of one group or another the Smoky River Municipal District is the best expression of a French regional administration. In 1969 all but one of the councillors were of French origin.

Each town has its own administration to handle problems within its limits. The percentage of French speaking councillors to the total in 1969 was as follows: Donnelly, 100; McLennan, 80; Girouxville, 75; Falher, 62; and Eaglesham, 40.

Several types of administrative divisions, non-political in nature, are superimposed on the political map. School district boundaries partially resemble the local administrative ones. Most of M.D. 130 is part of the High Prairie School Division, Number 48, while west of the Smoky is part of Spirit River School Division, Number 47; the East Smoky School Division based in Valleyview extends as far north as the Municipal District line. Elementary schools, either public or separate, are located in all small towns and villages in the study area, and children for the most part attend the most accessible. The regional high school is located in Donnelly. (When the decision to locate it there was made the Falher authorities were so upset that they formed their own school district.) In areas where there are a large number of

French families up to fifty per cent of the curriculum may be taught in French. In actual fact however this figure is rarely reached because of the difficulty of obtaining qualified teachers capable of teaching in French and the high costs involved in busing students to a central "French language" school. The problem is partially solved by the fact that members of a teaching order are usually attached to each school when some of the classes are given in French. Donnelly and Eaglesham are the only high schools in the Peace where such is the case. Figure 5.1 shows where families with high school students send them to school. Some English families in the southern portion of M.D. 130 send their children to Valleyview, paying the extra cost involved themselves, apparently because of the French situation at Donnelly. It should also be noted that French students north of the M.D. boundary attend school in Peace River.

The only hospital in the study area is at McLennan. Patients of this hospital come from M.D. 130 and west to beyond Eaglesham. Many people however prefer to use hospitals in Peace River or Edmonton.

The Media

Radio listening patterns and choice of newspaper are not as effective as is sometimes the case in determining regional patterns. Three radio stations - CKYL Peace River, CFGB Grande Prairie, and CBXY (CHFA) Falher - serve the study area. Though all three may be heard throughout the French Region signals are stronger in some areas. Most of the study area falls within the broadcasting area of the Peace River station, while the Grande Prairie signal is received strongly south of the major east-west highway in the west and the Little Smoky in the east. The Falher outlet is actually a relay station for CHFA, the

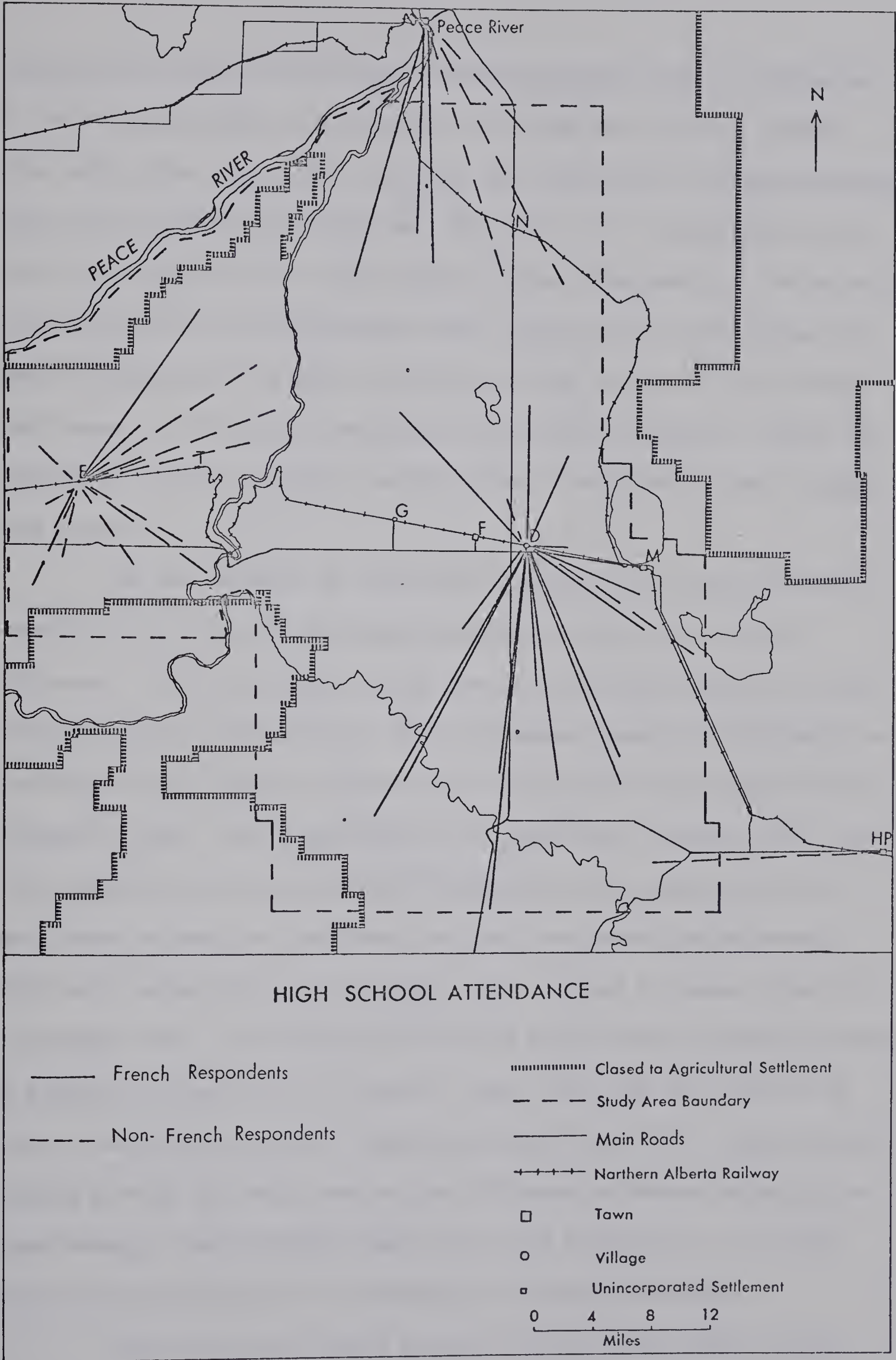


Figure 5.1

independently-owned CBC affiliated French language station in Edmonton. It opened in June 1969 and originally its range was set at a fifteen mile radius from Falher, but the range has turned out to be approximately thirty miles (FRANCO-ALBERTAIN, May 28, 1969, p. 1). Respondents were asked which radio station they listened to most frequently. The value of the results may be limited because CBXY had only been in operation for about two months at the time the field work was done, and it may take much longer for listeners' preferences and habits to change. Before the opening of the relay station the CHFA signal from Edmonton came through very poorly.

As was expected no non-French listened to the Falher station, however, 40 per cent of the French respondents were regular CBXY listeners. The outer limits of the area in which these people live are shown on the map (Figure 5.2). They correspond closely to the limits of the French Core. Within this area two-thirds of the French respondents listened to CBXY. The popularity of the Peace River station, CKYL, was often attributed to the fact that it broadcast daily agricultural reports aimed directly at the Peace, and had news about special events which were taking place in the Falher area, and had a greater appeal for the younger folk. An official of CHFA has stated that the French station is gaining in popularity, if letters, phone calls and the like can be used as indicators (personal conversation April 1, 1970). The television station serving the study area is the CBC Edmonton channel which is relayed through Grande Prairie, Peace River and High Prairie. The only French language programs are broadcast on Saturday mornings.

Peace River and Grande Prairie are the only centers in the

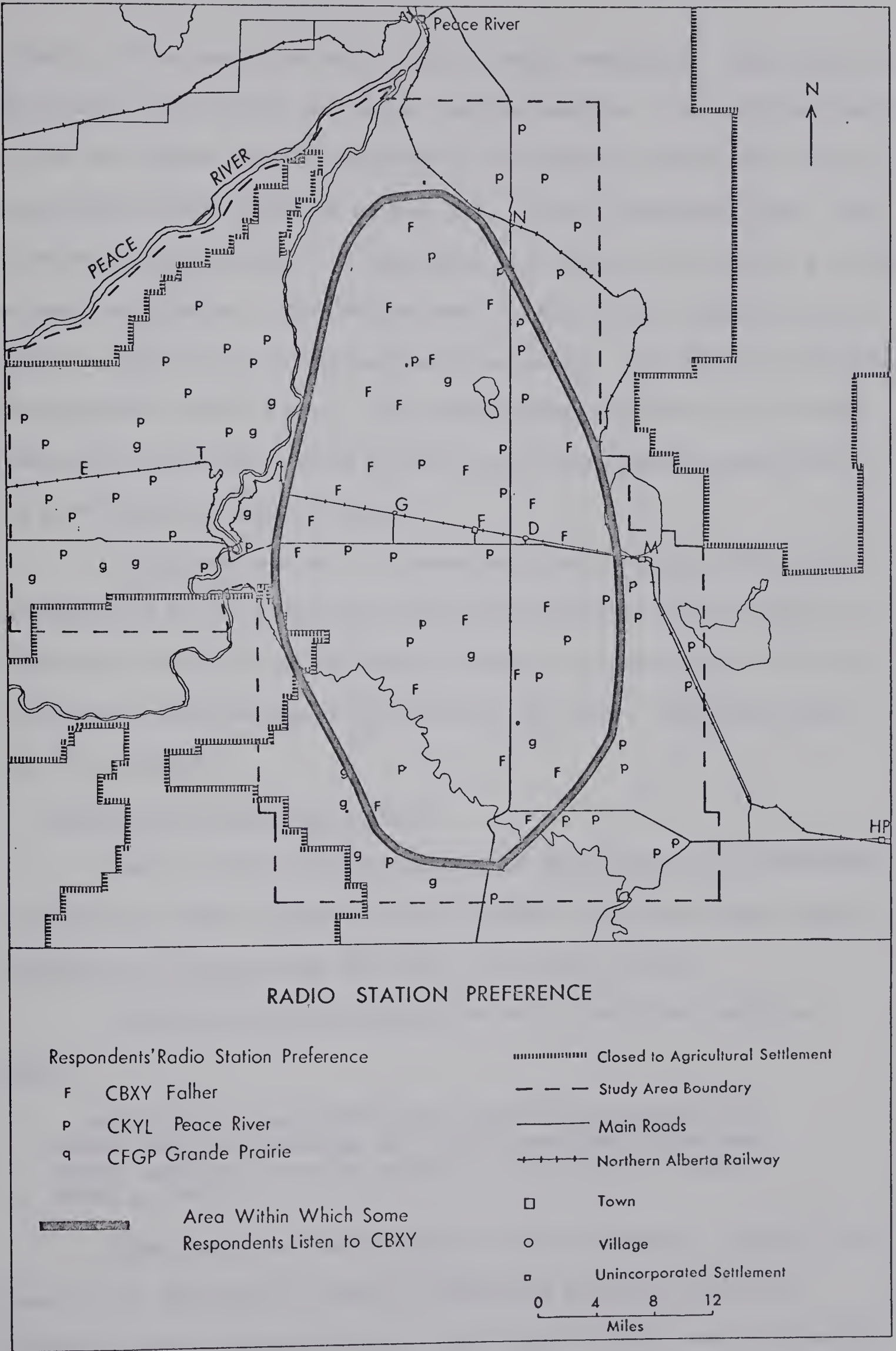


Figure 5.2

vicinity of the study area which publish daily newspapers. High Prairie, Valleyview, Spirit River and Falher publish weeklies. The problem though is that the Falher paper is new, has no subscribers, and is sent free and unsolicited to most families in M.D. 130. It is a bilingual paper. The accompanying map (Figure 5.3) shows that all families who receive a French language publication - the "Falher News" or the "Franco-Albertain" published in Edmonton, or a publication from Quebec - are equally distributed throughout the French Region. Just under eighty per cent of the French families in this area receive at least one French language publication, and some families receive several.

An attempt was made to obtain data on telephone calls between exchanges and sales of the Peace River Record Gazette for the French Core centers and others within the Peace in order to measure the interaction between the French Region and the rest of the Peace. The data however were not available.

Social and Cultural Activities

Most of the literature attributes the success of LA SURVIVANCE to the French social organization and cultural activities which together strengthen the language and the faith, the bonds of group.

Social and cultural activities are in large part with the Church.

The Church is responsible for organizing communities of Roman Catholics, teaching the faith, providing ritual services, and regulating the morals of the faithful (Sopher, 1969, p. 64).

The Church too has an administrative structure. However, because of its importance it was not considered previously under the heading of "local administration". The Catholic Church has a hierarchi-

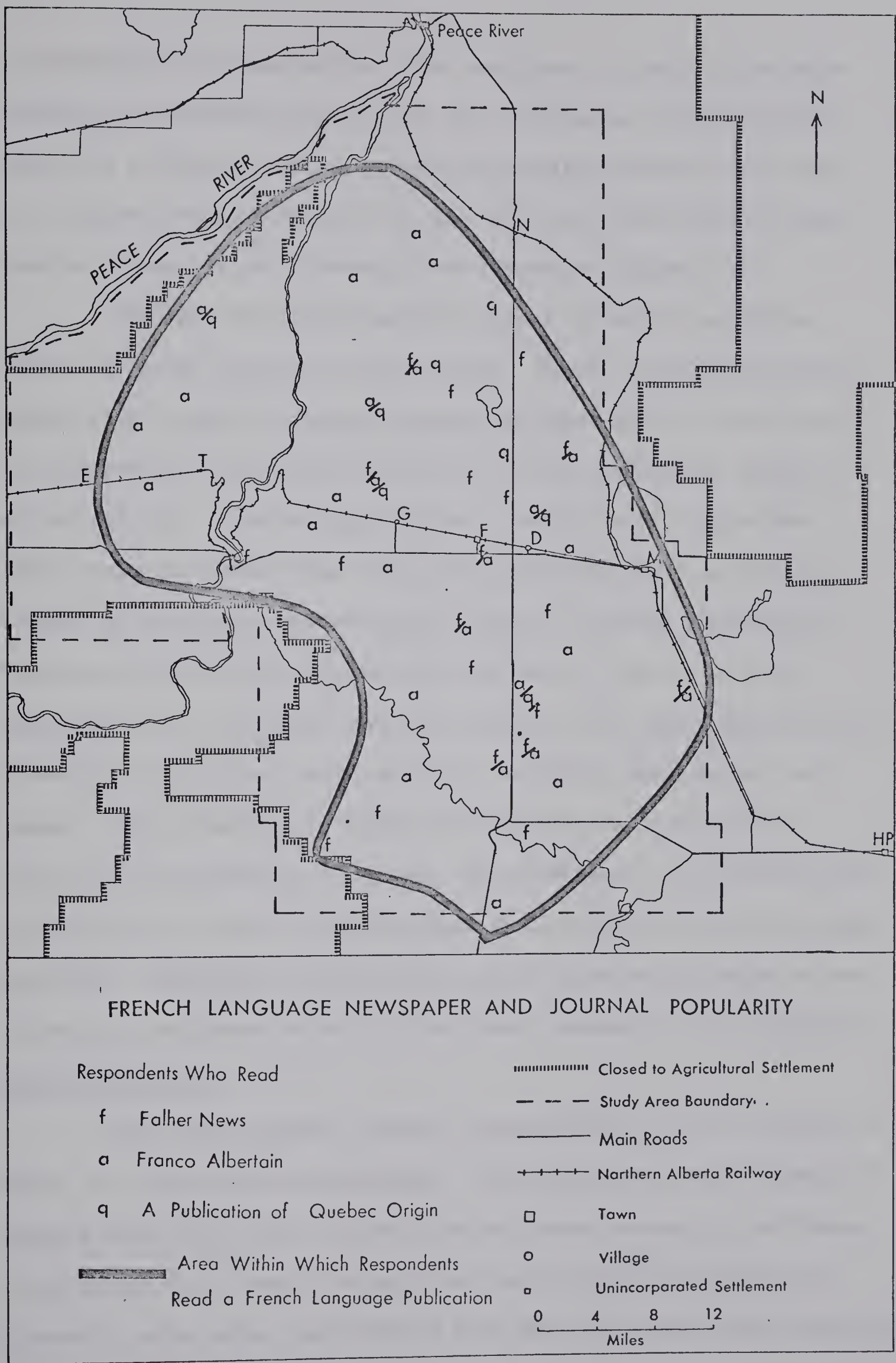


Figure 5.3

cal administrative organization. The study area is part of the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan with its see at McLennan. The Archbishop himself is a Franco-Albertain. There are parishes based on all towns and villages, and some hamlets, in the study area, each with a French Canadian priest, and each having fixed boundaries (Figure 5.4).

Each parish is the base for a number of social and often religion-oriented groups or organizations. These, as well as the more secular clubs, appear to be more popular on paper than in actual fact. The questionnaire showed that only 35 of the 91 respondents belong to any sort of club or social organization. Social participation was higher among the French than among the non-French, about one-half as compared to one-quarter respectively belong to a social organization. The associations directly linked with the Church, such as Action Catholique Rurale and Dames Chretiens (Ladies of St. Anne) have branches in the four French Core towns, and Guy, Jean Côté, Marie Reine, and Tangent. The Chevaliers de Colombe have 60 members in the Falher parish, 26 in Girouxville, 21 in Guy, 18 in McLennan, 12 in Donnelly and 5 in Jean Cote. Most such clubs secure their members from the surrounding parish. Eaglesham and Nampa lack church-based social organizations and are not considered as part of the French community in the Almanach Franco -Albertain.

The other regional oriented organizations are more economic in nature, but still involve membership. These vary from local chambers of commerce which draw their members from the areas surrounding the towns, to the Falher Co-Op Seed Cleaning Plant and the Caisse Populaire de Girouxville which draw their members from the entire Smoky River Municipal

District. Similarly, the Falher General Co-Op Association and CARDA, the French-oriented real estate, savings and credit agency in Girouxville, draw their members from beyond the study area as well as from within it.

A large number of the respondents belong to co-ops, especially those dealing mainly in food or bulk fuel. Members of these co-ops are shareholders receiving annual dividends and also receiving a refund proportional to the amount of their personal purchases at regular intervals. Co-ops are introduced at this stage in the text, rather than in the previous chapter, because they are being viewed as an organization to which someone can belong and possibly exhibit a regional identity. It was not uncommon to discover that a respondent purchased his groceries in one town, and belonged to a co-op store in another. About 70 per cent of both the French and non-French groups were members of at least one co-op; some belonged to two in different towns. The accompanying map of co-op membership (Figure 5.5) reveals a definite areal pattern. All the French families who belonged to co-ops are members of those in the French Core towns. A number of English families also used these French town co-ops. The respondents who belonged to the Eaglesham and Nampa co-ops were all English speaking. No respondents belonged to co-ops outside of the study area. Co-op membership then shows a great degree of focus on the French Core, especially by French-speaking families.

Summary

It is difficult to arrive at any major conclusions in this chapter because of the wide range of data treated. It was hoped that the range of Falher's attraction as a social and cultural center could be shown, but this proved difficult. Political-administrative boundaries

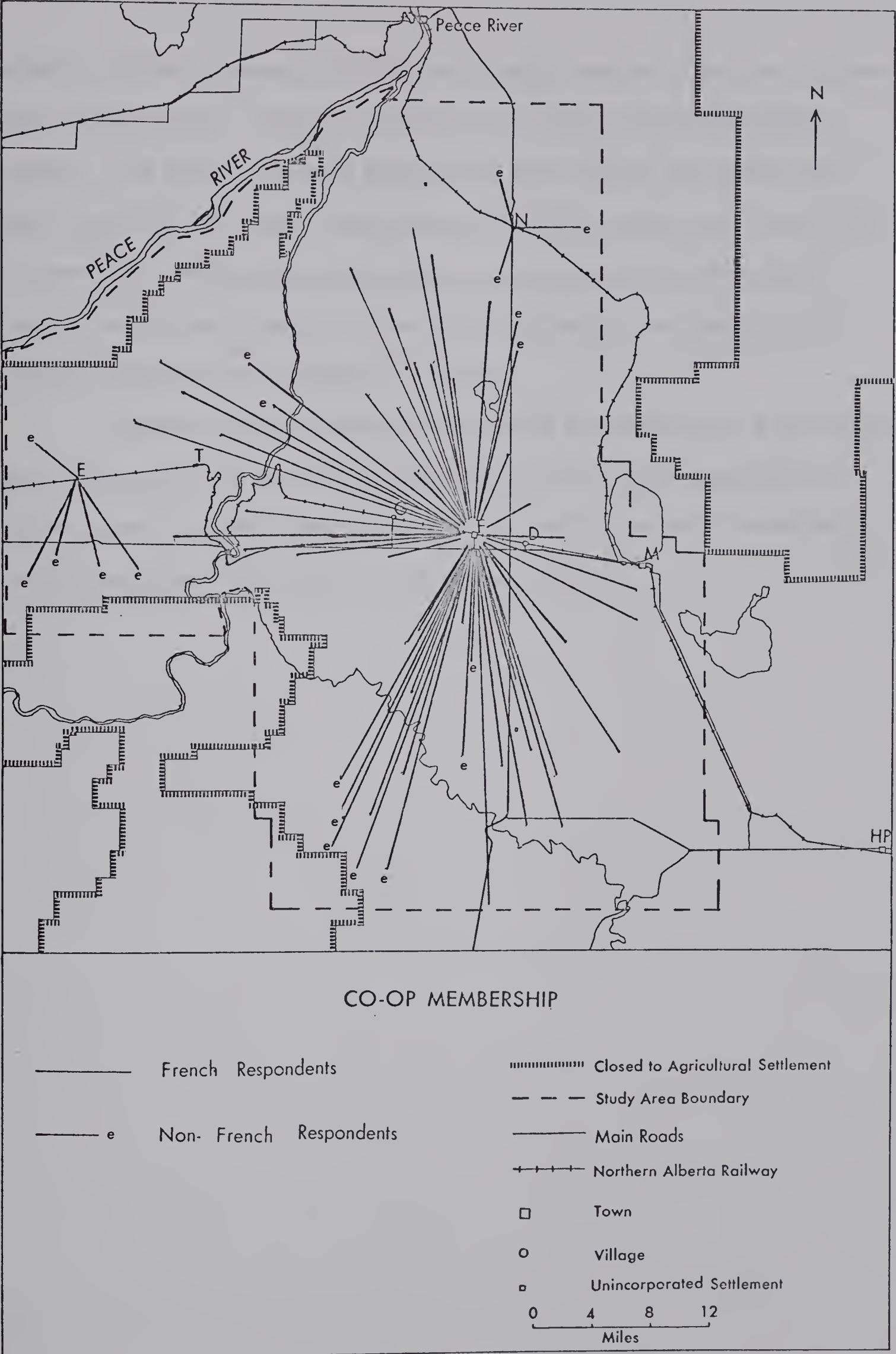


Figure 5.5

severely limited a person's choice as to which center to use for various needs and services. Falher's function as a social center is rather limited. The Church attracts people only from within the parish, and apart from that the social and cultural functions appear to be only for the townsfolk, and possibly the young. A question concerning movie theatres had to be eliminated from the questionnaire because of the negative responses and laughter it raised.

However, those features which could be analyzed in a functional sense, the media and social participation, show an area dependent on Falher larger than that dependent on it for purely economic needs and roughly equivalent in extent to the French Region.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this thesis is to discover whether certain techniques used in geography can provide an insight into the unity of the French Canadians living in a part of the Peace River district. This cohesiveness has been mentioned in the literature about French Canadians on the Prairies, and in the case of the study area was verified through conversation with a number of English speaking Peace River residents.

The approach to the problem is basically a regional one. A French culture area is defined and an attempt is made to assess its regionality or distinctiveness in terms of differences from the surrounding area and in terms of its point of focus. In examining the case for making the French Area a sub-region within the Peace the major problem is the lack of data at the enumeration area level. Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence to support the case for a French Region and to subdivide it into the CORE and the PERIPHERY. The core is the area "where the characteristics of the region find their most intense expression and their clearest manifestation" (Whittlesey, 1954, p. 32).

It is originally expected that the entire French Area will focus on its main town, Falher, for all of its social needs and for most of its economic needs, at least those which can be filled in Falher. To substantiate this hypothesis a Reilly-type gravitational model is introduced. It predicts that all but a small portion of the French Area will be within the Falher sphere. However, field work results show that there is far less social participation than was first thought, at least by rural dwellers and of the type that is suitable for geographic analysis.

Much of the social participation that exists is parish oriented, and since the parish boundaries are fixed there is little benefit gained from inquiring farther about this point. The trading area of Falher falls short of both the predicted area and the outer limits of the French Area. In the western section of the study area the Smoky River is a definite barrier, with Falher's influence close to non-existent west of it. French people living in the Tangent area only visit Falher regularly for the purposes of using the bank or dealing with an insurance agent. The Core of the French Area focuses strongly on Falher while the residents of the Periphery are often attracted elsewhere. This is especially true in terms of non-economic needs such as radio. No matter what the distance from Falher, French people tend to use it more than non-French people do.

Falher then is the definite point of focus for the French Core, and is always more important for people of French origin than for others. The French people on the whole, however, are not as united in their behavior as was expected and their dependence on the central French town decreases with distance from it. Most of the literature proclaiming the unity of the French Canadian groups in the West was written before 1960. The decade since has been one of rapid change - lessening control by the Church, a great increase in the use of the media, especially television, and increasing urbanization accompanied by an absolute decline in the population of the rural areas. The French Area may no longer be as cohesive as it once was. The effect of this modernization trend is evident in the use of the French language, one of the bonds of the French Area. Parents in the study area claim their children speak French as little as possible and attribute this largely to the fact that their formative years

are spent watching English language television. The children have little desire to attend school in French, and begin to use English once out of the classroom. In the recent hearings in Falher of the Worth Commission on educational planning the ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE-FRANCAISE DE L'ALBERTA representative suggested that "segregated schools might be a future requirement if the French language is to be preserved," but he was strongly opposed by students and some adults of the area (Edmonton Journal, Friday May 8, 1970). The adults are also using the French language less. The pull to the large urban centers for employment as well as social and economic attractions is constantly becoming stronger, and coupled with the decreasing manpower needs on the farm, contributes to a much greater exposure to the English language. Since the French Area has little contact with the center of the French language in Canada, that is Quebec, it is left open to these external influences, and the French spoken in the Peace is far from "pure." The French Area is becoming less and less distinctive. A Quebecer travelling in the Falher area saw nothing more unique than a few bilingual signs ("le Franco-Albertain", le 26 novembre, 1969, p. 4). Indeed, Vallee (1969) in his preliminary work ranked Alberta high in terms of assimilation of the French language group and describes Northern Alberta as moderate in terms of group resources and consciousness.

The culture region approach that this thesis has followed in studying the persistence of a French Canadian group has been successful in bringing out a number of very important elements in that group's pattern of human areal organization. The fact that the French Canadians do use a language other than English outside of the home is enough to

set them off from the surrounding area, even though they possess few other characteristics which can be attributed directly to their origin. The part of the Peace occupied by French Canadians has a common focus - Falher. This town, the center of French Canadian activities in the Peace, has a relatively large number of functions for its size, but still faces competition from three nearby towns. French people and non-French people do not use Falher to the same extent. Irrespective of which group's behavior is accepted as being the norm it can be concluded that Falher acts as a regional center for French Canadians to a much greater degree than it does for people of other origins. Since a similar study has never been carried out in the region, the present results cannot be compared to past ones. However, it is evident that the strength of the bond between the French people is weakening because in several areas Falher's sphere of influence does not extend as far as a gravity model predicts it should.

Though the approach used in this study cannot be applied to all ethnic groups or in all areas it is particularly suited to the study area. The fact that the French are Canadians by birth, language and sentiment has contributed to their desire and ability to resist assimilation more than the various groups of European origin. It is also preferable that the group under consideration form the majority of the population in a given area so that their behavioral patterns will be readily identifiable. In the writer's view a similar study of Northeastern Alberta would follow naturally from the present one. The French settlement pattern in the St. Paul - Bonnyville area differs somewhat from that of the Falher area and the comparison would no doubt prove interesting.

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ARDA. Soil Capability for Agriculture. Canada Land Inventory. Winagami - 83N. Ottawa, Queen's Printer. 1968.

Provincial Planning Commission. Map of Trade Areas of Alberta Towns. Edmonton, n.d.

Abbreviations Used in Bibliography

A.A.A.G. Annals of the Association of American Geographers.
 T.I.B.G. Institute of British Geographers, Transactions and Papers of.
 T.R.S.C. Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada.

APPENDIX

Rural Household Questionnaire

CONFIDENTIAL --- CONFIDENTIEL

LANGUAGE AND AREAL ORGANIZATION

NO. _____

Wayne Jackson
Department of Geography
University of Alberta
Edmonton 7, Alberta

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

LOCATION: _____ TIME: _____

SECTION I: General

1. When did you come to the Peace? _____
Quand est-vous venu à la Rivière-la-Paix? _____
2. Where did you come from? _____
D' où étiez-vous venu? _____
3. What is your occupation? _____
Quel est votre emploi? _____
4. Why did you choose to live on this particular site?
Pourquoi avez-vous choisi d'habiter justement ici?
 - a) To be near certain neighbours? _____
 - b) Land available to purchase? _____
 - c) Land available to homestead? _____
 - d) Other (Specify) __________
5. How much land do you own? _____
Quel est la grandeur de votre propriété? _____
6. Are your holdings concentrated or scattered? _____
Est-ce que votre propriété est concontrée ou dispersée? _____
7. How did you acquire your land? _____
Comment avez-vous obtenu votre terre? _____

SECTION II: Economic

The following 4 questions pertain only to farmers.

Les 4 questions qui suivent ne sont que pour les cultivateurs.

8. Where do you market your various products and why?
Ou vendez-vous vos divers produits et pourquoi?

	<u>Where?</u>	<u>Why?</u>
	<u>Closest</u>	<u>Best Price</u>
	<u>Plus Proche</u>	<u>Meilleur Prix</u>
		<u>Personal</u>
		<u>Preference</u>
Barley - orge		
Wheat - blé		
Hay - foin		
Oats - avoine		
Rape seed - colza		
Flax - lin		
Beef Cattle - bovins		
Milk - lait		

9. Do you rent some of your land to someone, or do you rent land from someone?
Avez-vous des locataires ou etes vous locataire?
Details (Including to or from whom) _____

10. Do you use the community grazing pasture? _____
Utilizer-vous le paturages public (commun)? _____

11. a) Do you ever take up off-farm employment? _____
Avez-vous jamais un occupation secondaire? _____
b) If yes, where and for whom? _____
Si oui, ou et pour qui? _____

12. Where do you buy the following and why?
Ou achetez-vous ces produits-ci et pourquoi?

Seeds - les grains _____

Fertilizer - l'engrais _____

Machinery - la machinerie (implements) _____

Beer and liquor - la biere et la boissons _____

Gas and oil - la gasoline et huile à moteur _____

Clothes - des vetements _____

Groceries - la nourriture _____

Drugs, etc. - la pharmacie _____

(In the last five the question should refer to the most recent occasion.)

13. Which of the following services do you use? Where is the particular office located? Why do you use that particular one?
Lesquels des services suivants utilisez-vous? Où est la bureau?
Pourquoi utilisez-vous ce bureau-ci?

Bank - la banque _____

Insurance - l'assurance _____

Doctor - le medecin _____

Lawyer - l'avocat (notaire) _____

SECTION III - Social

14. Which newspapers did you read last week?
 Quels Journaux avez-vous le la semaine passe?
 a) Peace River Record Gazette _____
 b) Grande Prairie Herald Tribune _____
 c) Courrier de Falher news _____
 d) South Peace News (High Prairie) _____
 e) Le Franco Albertain _____
15. Which radio station(s) did you listen to yesterday?
 Quel poste a la radio avez-vous ecoute hier?
 a) CBX - Edmonton _____
 b) CFGP - Grande Prairie _____
 c) CKYL - Peace River _____
 d) CBXY (CHFA) - Falher _____
16. Where do you go to the movies? _____
 A quel cinema allez-vous? _____
17. To which organizations do you belong? Why? Where is each located?
 Aux quelles organisations et associations êtes-vous membre? Pourquoi? Ou se trouve chacun?

Economic Co-ops:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Carda Fermiers unis

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Social - A.C.F.A.

Action Catholic Rural _____
 Chevaliers de Colomb _____
 Dames de St. Anne _____
 Soc. St. Jean Baptiste _____
 Divers Assoc. Paroissiales _____

18. How many children do you have? _____
 Combien des enfants avez-vous? _____
19. Where do the children attend school? _____
 Les enfants, où vont-ils à l'école? _____
20. If they have left school what do they do now and where? _____

 Sils avaient quitte l'école que font-ils maintenant et où? _____

21. What is your official language? _____
 Quel est votre langue officielle? _____

22. What is your mother tonque? _____
Quel est votre langue maternelle? _____
23. What part of the time do you use French?
Quel partie de la temp s parlez-vous Francais?

0% 25% 50%% 75% 100%

- a) In the home - chez vous
- b) Socially - avec vos amis
- c) Business - pour les affaires commerciaux

COMMENTS:

Letter Sent to Social Organizations

Department of Geography
University of Alberta
Edmonton 7, Alberta

October 27, 1969

Sir/Madame:

I am a graduate student currently doing a research project on your area and need your assistance. Would you be kind enough to indicate on the enclosed map, as accurately as is possible, the area from which you draw your _____, and return it to me in the enclosed envelope.

I assure you that this information will be regarded as confidential and used for academic research only. Your co-operation will be greatly appreciated.

Monsieur/Madame:

Je poursuis des recherches qui portent sur votre region que vous retrouverez ici sur cette carte. Vous facilitez enormement ma tache si vous pouviez situer le plus exactement possible sur la carte la region parmi laquelle se recrute surtout _____, et me la retourner par courrier. Vous trouverez à cet effet une enveloppe affranchie.

Je peux vous assurer en toute sincerité que les renseignements fournis seront strictement confidentiels et ne serviront qu'à des fins de recherche uniquement. Je compte beaucoup sur votre co-operation et je vous remercie à l'avance.

Veillez agréer l'expression de mes sentiments les meilleurs.

Yours truly/Bien votre,

Wayne Jackson

B29955